



Little Lever School

be kind | work hard | take responsibility

LITTLE LEVER SCHOOL

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved: April 2023

Next Review: July 2023

CONTROL SHEET :

Version Number	1
Original date approved	
Current date approved	April 2023
Approved by	Trust Board
Date of next review	July 2023
Status	Not approved
Policy Owner	Gemma Hutchinson / Dominic Mckeon
Policy Location	R Drive / Policies
Target Group	Students / Parents / Staff
Trust Board Link	Alyson Middlemass

DOCUMENT HISTORY :

Version	Date of Review	Author	Note of revisions
1			

1. Introduction

1.1 Little Lever School strives to ‘help every person achieve things they never thought they could’, and recognises that for students to achieve their potential, they must have excellent attendance and punctuality. Little Lever School aspires for all students to have 100% attendance.

Absence can lead to safeguarding concerns. For example, regular attendance is an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. Regular absence, particularly unexplained absence, can be a red flag for safeguarding issues. It is therefore vital that all students are in school regularly.

Little Lever School aims to support student and parents/carers by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Creating a safe and supportive environment where all students can thrive.

Little Lever School will also support parents/carers to perform their duty to ensure their children attend regularly and will promote and support their outstanding punctuality to the school and to lessons.

Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual students and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that the school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment, where all students want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Little Lever School has a senior leader who is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance. This person is Miss G Hutchinson (Assistant Principal) ghu@little-lever.bolton.sch.uk

The school website contains further and more detailed information for parents/carers including, but not limited to, how and who to contact in the school about attendance, as well as our extensive strategies and resources regarding the promotion of excellent attendance.

1.2 Trust Vision and Values

Our purpose:

‘To help every person achieve things they never thought they could’

We put students first. They are at the heart of our decision making.

Our Values:

- Be kind
- Work Hard
- Take Responsibility

Our purpose and values help us to continually improve the life chances of children.

2. Scope of the Policy

2.1 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- Children missing education: Statutory guidance for local authorities 2016
- Working together to improve school attendance 2022.

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

2.2 By law, all schools and academies (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The law requires the register to be taken twice a day- at the start of the morning session and the once in the afternoon session. Little Lever welcomes students between 8.00am and 8.30am and registers will close at 9:30am. (Appendix 1-attendance codes)

2.3 Planned medical or dental appointments.

Any absence interrupts the continuity of a student's learning and should be avoided other than in exceptional circumstances. Applications for other types of absence in term time must be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absence can be found in section 2.7.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is usually counted as an authorised absence (where the appointment could not be scheduled outside of school hours and where we have seen clear evidence); advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Parents are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments **out of school hours** where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of the school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

2.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late, but before the register has closed, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L). This will apply to students arriving between 8:30am and 9:30am.

Students arriving after registers have closed, will be marked as unauthorised absence (U) unless medical evidence has been provided, and will be issued with a late detention.

2.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up all absences and will ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. The school will always contact parents/carers as soon as possible to alert them that their child has not arrived at school if the absence is unexplained. This is usually a phone call to ensure the student is safe and to clarify arrangements that can be made to ensure the student returns to school as quickly as possible. A member of staff may visit the student's home to discuss attendance.

2.6 Reporting to parents

Parents/carers will receive attendance updates. Attendance is reviewed weekly by the attendance team and where there are concerns, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss what support the school can offer. In addition, students will discuss their current attendance weekly during one of their form sessions and this will be recorded in their planner. Parents are encouraged to look at their child's planner regularly.

2.7 Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Principal **may not grant** any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. If you wish to apply for term time leave for exceptional reasons, then a 'Request for Absence Form' must be completed and this must be done well in advance (Appendix 2: Request for Absence Form)

Please refer to the Department for Education working together guidance, reference and linked above, for the latest guidance.

2.8 Legal Sanctions

Parents/carers may be issued with a fixed penalty notice (fined) for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. For children of a non-compulsory age, the Principal may revoke a child's place if their attendance falls below an acceptable level and offer this place to a child on a waiting list.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay within 28 days could result in prosecution in court for failure to ensure regular attendance to the school and failure to respond in full to the fixed penalty notice.

Please note that our policy recognises the government's definition of both persistently and severely absent students and we reserve the right to instigate legal interventions to help improve attendance

when at these thresholds. Students are considered persistently absent when attendance drops below 90% and they are considered severely absent if attendance drops below 50%.

In line with Bolton Local Authority's Code of Conduct: Issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from school the issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Truancy from school, with or without parents knowledge (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Leave of absence in term time without approval
- Delayed return from a period of leave of absence which has been approved by the school
- Unauthorised absence i.e. no reason given for absence
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)
- Suspended pupil present in a public place during the school hours of the school where the pupil is on roll

2.9 Children Missing Education (CME)

All schools, including academies and free schools, must monitor students' attendance through their daily register. Should a student leave Little Lever School and the school is not informed by the parents of which new school the student is going to attend, the school will take action to trace the students within 10 school days. This is classed as a missing student.

Little Lever School works closely with local authorities and will escalate the concern to them via the relevant reporting procedures. The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a student jointly with the local authority before deleting the student's name from the register. The school will notify the local authority of when we are about to remove a student's name from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. For students absent from the school for 20 continuous days and where all attempts from the local authority and the academy have still not established their whereabouts, the student will be removed from the school roll.

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school or academy, the principal must be informed in writing. Students cannot be removed from roll until we have been notified by another school or academy that a place has been offered and accepted.

2.10 Strategies for promoting attendance

Little Lever School reviews the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of students of all abilities. Our curriculum implementation, ILPs (Individual Learning Plans), Levelled support strategies, SEND passports, targeted interventions for students falling behind and use of TAs ensure that students are supported academically. These interventions ensure students can access their learning and therefore be more motivated to attend. In addition, there are a range of strategies to promote good attendance. These include, 'In It to Win It' and the Magic 15 as well as weekly Form Time praise for 100% attendance. Celebrating good and improved attendance forms part of our praise culture and the school will regularly reward students. The high presence of staff in Little Lever School creates a safe and vibrant environment and allows all students to attend. At Little Lever School there is also a

weekly inclusion meeting to discuss the most vulnerable students and to review interventions to overcome barriers to learning, including poor attendance.

3. Role and Responsibilities

3.1 Little Lever School believes that attendance is everyone's responsibility and has adopted a consistent approach to monitoring attendance to intervene and offer support to students and families at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends the school each day it is open, dressed in full uniform
- Contacting the school if their child is unable to attend by 8.30am
- Providing their most up to date contact details
- Only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and well in advance
- Booking any medical appointments around the school day, where possible
- Proactively engaging with the school with regards to any support that is offered to improve attendance.

Leaders at Little Lever School are responsible for:

- Establishing and promoting a culture whereby students want to attend the school, helping all stakeholders understand the benefits that good attendance brings.
- Ensuring that the school has a clear attendance policy which is published on the school website
- Having a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance
- Having a link Trustee with oversight of improving attendance
- Guaranteeing that attendance is everyone's responsibility and keeping the concept of school attendance high profile within the school community
- Having robust daily processes to follow up absence
- Working with parents at an early intervention level so that they are fully aware of the school attendance policy
- Ensuring the attendance policy and procedures are applied and monitored constantly
- Supporting all students, particularly the most vulnerable, to attend the school regularly
- Helping to identify, overcome and remove barriers for good attendance and signpost support where it is needed
- Working with parents/carers in a more formal capacity, where there is lack of engagement and/or where support is not working. This may involve working with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Referring students under 90% to Team Education Welfare Service LTD to access further support and guidance to rapidly improve attendance
- Intensifying support through statutory children's social care if there are safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that school leaders and staff receive training on attendance
- Making certain that school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Reviewing the attendance policy annually in accordance with its own internal procedures
- Providing the trust board with timely information so that performance can be scrutinised at the highest level.

4. External Provider: Team Education Welfare Service

- To provide support for the Attendance Officer, to hold meetings with parents who have been identified as a serious cause for concern.
- To conduct home visits and prepare paperwork for penalty fines.
- To develop parenting contracts in conjunction with the Head of Year.
- Implement fast tracking where there is evidence that absences are parentally condoned.
- Work together with the school to maintain a comprehensive attendance policy that successfully challenges poor attendance and rewards improvement.
- Attend court and give evidence in support of prosecutions where required
- Meet regularly with the School's senior lead on attendance to continue development of good practice.
- Provide all relevant administrative, logistical and support services to ensure both continuity and seamless delivery of its service.

5. Attendance Procedures

5.1 Little Lever School believes that all stakeholders should be clear with regards to what to expect should a student's attendance fall below our attendance thresholds.

Working together to improve school attendance (September 2022) makes clear that all parties; including schools, parents, multi-academy trusts and local authorities should place a strong emphasis on school attendance.

All students are expected to attend every session, but where a student's attendance falls below our thresholds of 97%, or if anomalous patterns of attendance are discovered, our attendance procedures will be instigated according to the Little Lever activation tier shown in the table below:

96% - 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Praise and reward for improvement / maintain 100%•Regular monitoring of attendance to identify possible students of concern early.•Early intervention provided by form tutors•Referral to Learning Leaders
90% - 95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Praise and reward for improvement•First concerns of non-attendance•Learning Leaders identify barriers that may be preventing attendance•Attendance support plans established•Referral to Team Education Welfare Service
UNDER 90% - PERSISTENTLY ABSENT and SEVERELY ABSENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Intervention by Team Education Welfare Service•Identify barriers that may be preventing attendance•Attendance support plans•Daily monitoring•Legal action

6. Where to find further information

6.1 Please contact the school directly for further information about this policy or visit the My Attendance, My Future webpage on the school's website (insert webpage link here when built). The information provided in section 2 of this policy also signposts further documentation regarding attendance policies and procedures.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE' guidance on academy attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
Attendance Codes		
/	Present	Student is present
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 Codes		
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 an exceptional circumstance
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 in 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 Codes		
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	The school is not satisfied with the reasons for the student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Student on 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 is set up but the student has not yet joined the academy
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Request for Absence Form

REQUEST FOR STUDENT ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Any absence interrupts the continuity of a student’s learning. Government legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance.

Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take students out of the academy for holidays during term time.

It is expected that this Request for Absence Form is submitted to the school at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on this form. The school has the right to serve a Penalty Notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of the school without authorisation. Penalties require each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance.

Name of child(ren) and Dates of Birth

- 1) Name: _____ D.O.B _____
- 2) Name: _____ D.O.B _____
- 3) Name: _____ D.O.B _____

Address: _____

Names of all parents/carers living at this address: _____

Reason for absence: _____

I have included all supporting documents for my application including flight details

From (Dates) _____ To (Dates) _____ Number of days

For medical absence, please attach an appointment card or letter.

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO THE SCHOOL RECEPTION (please turn over)

The education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013:

The education (pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless;

- *An application has been made in advance to the Head Teacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with; and*
- *The proprietor (Head Teacher) or person authorised by the Head Teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to the application.*

Failure to ensure your child attends regularly is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If the reasons given for your child's absence from the school are not satisfactory then the Local Authority may take legal proceedings against you. This may result in:

- A Penalty Notice (£60 per parent per child), failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in prosecution.
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000
- Prosecution under Section 444 (1a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

All applications for leave of absence during term time must be returned to the school well before the period of absence. We have a duty to inform the Local Authority if any pupil has 5 days or more unauthorised absences from school. Should attendance drop below 90%, we will closely monitor attendance on our vulnerable students register.

The local authority will investigate persistent absence and legal proceedings may be considered in accordance with government legislation.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) are issued per parent, per child. For example:

Two parents taking two children on holiday during term time may receive fines totalling £240 (if paid with 21 days). This will double to £480 if paid after 21 days but before 28 days. If unpaid after 28 days, you may be fined up to £1000.