London South East Educational Trust – Belmont Academy

Attendance Policy

Responsible post holder	Executive Headteacher/DCEO
Approved by / on	September 2017
Reviewed	September 2018
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Reviewed	September 2022
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1. Introduction

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential and attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils.

1.2 London South East Academies Trust (LSEAT) 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.

1.3 LSEAT values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.4 LSEAT recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole Trust community and is everyone's responsibility. 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 safeguarding, bullying and behaviour. This policy also takes into account the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations Act 2000 and Equality Act 2010.

1.5 LSEAT have reviewed their attendance policy to ensure the DfE guidance document 'Working together to improve school attendance' is included where applicable.

1.6 At London South East Academies Trust in order for an attendance record to be deemed good, it must be 95% or above:
- 100% Excellent Attendance
- 97% Good Attendance
- 95% Expected Attendance
- 90% attendance means a pupil is missing half a day of education every week.
- Pupils with 90% and below are classified as Persistent Absentees
- 80% attendance all the way through secondary school is the equivalent of missing a whole year of education.
- 50% or Below – Severe Absence

2. Aims of the Trust

2.1 To improve the overall percentage attendance and reduce unauthorised absence.

2.2 To develop a learning environment for the Trust where pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and to be punctual because pupils feel valued members of the Trust community and that they are safe and secure.

2.3 To offer pupils and parents/carers good support, advice and guidance on the importance of good attendance and punctuality. Working in collaboration with the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service.

3. Legal Framework

3.1 Under the Education Act 1999, parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to

ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered. If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under this Act.

3.2 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 statutory school leaving age.

3.3 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.

4.   Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 London South East Academies Trust believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, the Trust, parents/ carers, pupils, the LA and the wider Trust community.
- The Senior Leader for Attendance at Belmont Academy is the Headteacher, Lucy Childs who can be contacted via the school office email on office@belmont.lseat.org.uk.
- School registers will be taken at the start of each morning and once during each afternoon session as a legal requirement.

Belmont Academy Start Time	Belmont Academy End Time	Registering Lateness
Nursery: 8.30am Reception: 8:45 – 8:55am Year 1 & 2: 8:40 – 8:50am Year 3 & 4: 8:40 – 8:50am Year 5 & 6: 8:45 – 8:55am	Nursery: 11:30am Reception: 3:10pm Year 1 & 2: 3:15pm Year 3 & 4: 3:10pm Year 5 & 6: 3:20pm	Late Mark (L)= 9.00am Unauthorised Late Mark (U)= 9.15am onwards

A U Code means the pupil is in school and present, however they have arrived unacceptably late without an authorised reason and although the pupil is now in school the mark is not counted against the overall attendance percentage.

Any pupil who arrives late and receives a Late Mark or Unauthorised Late Mark (L/U Code) may be required to make the minutes of learning lost as outlined in the Behaviour Policy. Please note an Authorised Late Mark (U) equates to an absent mark and will detrimentally affect a pupil's overall attendance which can alone trigger a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents/carers
- Annually review the Trust's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor each school's attendance and related issues through weekly, termly and yearly reporting to the appropriate Senior Leadership Team and the Trust
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and DfE as required and on time
- Ensure that each 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 intervention

5.   Categorising absence

5.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

5.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

5.3 Parents should phone the school by 9:00am 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 or email from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

To report an absence contact: 01322432057 and select option 1

5.4 Illness in most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

5.5 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 should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

5.6 Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or a personalised timetable agreed in special circumstances as part of a reintegration package.

5.7   Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

5.8 Family Holidays and Extended Leave Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

5.8.1 The Department for Education has issued advice regarding absence from school which makes it clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of

absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.(Working together to improve school attendance 2022).

5.8.2 Leave of absence that is taken and not authorised including term time holidays, may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice (a fine of £60) per parent/carer per child. Issued and payable to Bexley Local Authority.

5.9 <u>Religious Observance</u> London South East Academies Trust acknowledges the multifaith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

      5.9.1 Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

      5.9.2 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

5.10 <u>Study Leave</u> Study leave **may** be granted in certain exceptional circumstances for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

5.11 <u>Late Arrival</u> Pupils arriving after registration time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9:00am, pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as arriving late using the 'L' Code. A pupil arriving after 9:15am will be recorded as unauthorised late using the 'U' code.

5.12 <u>Missing/did not arrive in School</u>   If your child is not in school after 9:30am, telephone calls and emails will be sent to parent/carer requesting a reason for the absence. If a Parent/Carer does not know why their child has not arrived in school, they must inform the Police and report them as 'missing'. School procedures for Missing Child in Education will then be activated (see appendix for exemplar).

6.   Deletions from the Register

6.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- 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

6.2 LSEAT will follow Bromley, Bexley and Surrey Local Authority Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown where applicable.

6.3 LSEAT will ensure all schools preserve attendance register entries and admission registers for a minimum of three years of entry.

7. Parents/Carers

- Parents/ carers should understand the link between attendance, attainment and wider wellbeing
- Parents/carers should be regularly informed of their child's attendance and absence levels
- They should talk to their child about school and take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- 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
- Avoid taking holidays during term time
- Schools and parents/ carers should work together in a supportive approach and this includes referring to other agencies when further support is required
- Where voluntary support is not effective then parents/ carers need to understand that further action, including legal action will take place with the LA leading and school supporting.

8.   Using Attendance Data

- Pupils attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis and trends and support will be identified accordingly
- Regular attendance reports will be provided to class teacher's and school leaders to facilitate attendance discussions where necessary
- Data will be analysed on a half termly, termly and yearly cycle to identify key patterns/ trends
- Attendance data will be benchmarked against national for specific types of schools
- Pupils attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if it is a cause for concern
- Attendance Data will be used to identify sub-groups that may require additional resources including boys and girls, SEND, pupils with social worker, LAC, FSM, ethnicity
- Attendance data will be used to Safeguard the pupils at London South East Academies Trust and implement appropriate interventions. Please see individual school procedures for this for daily monitoring of attendance.

9. Medical Needs

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance and these include those pupils with long term medical needs. They have the same rights to an education and the schools ambitions should be the same also.

Schools need to be mindful of barriers and provide additional support where necessary. Reasonable adjustments need to be considered where a child has a disability and /or an individual healthcare plan in place where needed.

The school should work with external partners and parents to ensure a bespoke support package is in place to support the child attending school.

15. Part Time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full time education. In exceptional circumstances a temporary timetable will be used in our schools to meet the individual needs. When the Part Time Timetable is put in place, it must be agreed with parents and other external agencies working with the child. It is time limited and will be reviewed with the full intention to reintegrate the child back to full time over a period of weeks.

16. Sharing Information with other stakeholders

LSEAT has a civic responsibility to work with all local partner agencies. For some of our families, with siblings in other schools, there will be similar attendance issues and barriers. It is therefore important for schools to work together.

LAs should also be a key partner that our schools work with and Targeting Support Meetings should be carried out between schools, LAs and key families on at least a termly basis.

17. Expectations of Trust Board

LSEAT Board is expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the schools' ethos and policies
- Ensure leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help focus improvement efforts
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training on attendance

18. Training for all staff regarding Attendance

- All Trust staff should receive Attendance Training as part of CPD with the following factors included:
  i) Importance of attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances
  ii) The law and requirements of schools including keeping registers
  iii) Schools strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance
  iv) How the school works with external partners to improve attendance for specific individual pupils
- Further and more specific training should be provided to those staff who have attendance within their remit focusing on:
  i) The skills to interpret and analyse attendance data ii) Training to support pupils with specific barriers to education
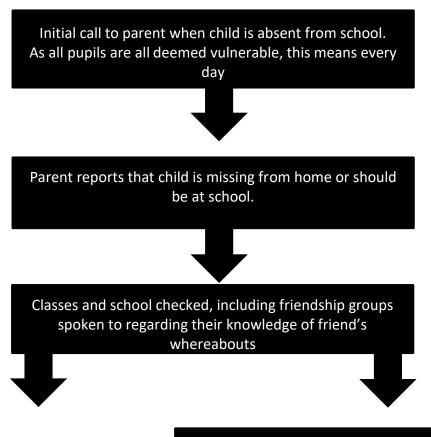
- As a Trust we will also work across our schools sharing good and best practice in regards to attendance for key personnel who lead on this area.

14. Support and Interventions

- As absence is often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, our schools, our Trust and local authorities always work together to understand the barriers and provide support.
- The Schools, Trust and LAs will work together using the following processes:
  i)   Voluntary support – supporting families to access services to tackle barriers ii)   Formal support including parenting contracts, education supervision orders, statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns and attendance prosecutions where all other routes have failed.
- The Trust will use interventions to improve attendance as part of the voluntary support such as:
  - First day absence telephone Calls
  - Emails
  - Parent Meetings
  - Warning Letters
  - Home Visits
  - Punctuality/Attendance Contracts
  - Targeting Support Meetings
  - Undertake a Common Assessment Framework
  - Referral to Multi Agencies

- When avenues of supportive intervention as listed above have been utilised and there has been no improvement in attendance then we will use the formal support listed above.

Appendix One - Child Going Missing Protocol (Exemplar)

Initial Operational Procedures that need to be followed by Senior Leaders if child goes missing from Home/ School

Initial call to parent when child is absent from school. As all pupils are all deemed vulnerable, this means every day

Parent reports that child is missing from home or should be at school.

Classes and school checked, including friendship groups spoken to regarding their knowledge of friend's whereabouts

If child is still missing

Headteacher informed and parents spoken to regarding key details of last sightings etc

Police are contacted via 999 and key details provided both regarding child, last sightings and key contacts at school. If child is known to Social Services, then social worker is contacted at this time as well.

Continual attempts made to contact child and continual liaison with multi agencies, family and friends until child found