



The Shared Learning Trust

THE LINDEN
ACADEMY

Attendance Policy

Policy Title:	Attendance Policy	Owner:	Jermaine Burroughs
Review period:	2 years	Approval by:	Policy Owner
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The Linden Academy **Attendance Policy**

Rationale

If students are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance are crucial. The Academy will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all students and encourage all students to improve their attendance.

Our Academy will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home–school links and communication systems that can be used whenever there is a concern about attendance so that these can be effectively identified and addressed.

We will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students and strive to achieve our Academy target of 97%.

Strategies

The Academy will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
- All Class Teachers to accurately complete am registration.
- Complete class registers accurately for each lesson and pm registration.
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence and follow up any unexplained absences.
- Display attendance rates around the Academy and reward good and improved attendance of all students.
- Promote positive staff attitudes to students returning after absence.
- Regularly evaluate attendance procedures.
- Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a student is absent, she/he will be missed and to recognise the needs of the individual student when planning re-integration following significant periods of absence.
- Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibility to ensure their son/daughter leaves for school on time and provide explanation for absences.
- Discourage families from taking holidays in term time.
- Issue Penalty Notices to parents who refuse to support improvement in their child's attendance in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.



Procedures for communicating with Parents and Carers

Absence Letters:

- All parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Academy Reception staff as early as possible on the first day of their child's absence.
- If no contact is made from the parents on the morning of the student's first day of absence, the Attendance Officer will send a message via our 'Arbor Messaging' system.
- The Attendance Officer will also complete 2nd calling to parents/carers.
- If the student has not returned after 3 days or has not provided an authorisation note, the Attendance Officer will pursue the absence with parents/carers
- If no response after 3 days, EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) will visit the family home.
- Procedures for pupils whose attendance falls are highlighted below:
 - Early intervention - Parents communicated with when attendance falls below 95%
 - Support - The pastoral staff will meet with parents to discuss issues
 - Fixed Penalty Notices – Can be issued if parents fail to support the improvement in their child's attendance

Registration and Punctuality

Marking of Registers:

- Staff has a legal obligation to complete the register accurately.
- This will be completed in Arbor.
- All notes from students must be passed on quickly to the Attendance Officer.
- Class teachers should check that notes have the name of student, class name and dates of absence.
- Class teachers should follow up on all absences.

There are 2 registration periods a day which will be taken electronically at 8:45am and 1pm (during the afternoon time varies slightly by year group – all registers should be complete by 1.35pm).

Morning Registration:

Students, who arrive after 8:50am, should be given a late mark (L) – this counts as a "present" but shows that the student did not arrive on time.

Anybody arriving after 9:20am will be marked unauthorised absent ("U") and will sign in with the Receptionist.

Students should be brought to the main entrance by their parent/carer who will speak to the member of SLT on duty/Receptionist about why the child is late. This should not be the responsibility of the child. Any parent/carer who does not bring their child in to the school to speak to the staff member will be contacted.



Roles and responsibilities

Class teachers:

Class teachers are the people who know the students best. They have the most contact with them and are usually aware of the outside influences. Their intervention is imperative if we are to improve attendance.

- Give attendance/punctuality a high profile.
- Monitor registration via printouts provided by the Attendance Officer
- Passing notes from parents/carers to the Attendance office to ensure that they are coded.
- In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 amended 1st September 2013, all requests for term-time leave may not be granted by the Principal unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Where a student has sporadic days off or patterns of absence are identified; which causes a student's attendance to fall below 92% over a rolling 3 week period, a discussion will be required with the parent, support offered and attendance monitored on a weekly basis.
- Any notes from phone calls home or absence notes should be passed to the Attendance Office promptly.
- Speak with parents at dismissal if asked to by a SLT member to carry out a wellbeing chat.

Attendance Officer:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile.
- Posting out letters of concern (1 and 2).
- Working with students and families to raise profile of attendance.
- Make first day contact with parents/carers of students who are not in school and where the reason for absence is not known between 9:30 – 11:30am.
- Registering students who are late.
- Liaison with The Shared Learning Trust EWO.
- Meeting with the Senior Leader to discuss whole school attendance, rewards and to follow up any concerns.
- Completing register totals on a weekly basis.
- Completing annual school returns to the Government.
- Daily and weekly lateness
- Assist Senior Leader in highlighting students to be included in the 'High Level Attendance meeting' with the DSL and Principal.
- Maintaining attendance notice boards.
- Analysing attendance figures to provide useful information on attendance of individuals, groups and the whole Academy.
- Completing CME (Children Missing Education) Proformas.
- Track all Penalty Notices that have been issued.
- Request Penalty Notices to be issued by CBC



The Shared Learning Trust Education Welfare Officer (EWO):

- Potential referrals can be discussed with EWO who will suggest the most appropriate course of action.
- Ensure Pre-referral letter is sent by the Academy.
- Attendance at CP conferences, Child in Need, Core Group, strategy, planning meetings and SLM's as necessary.
- Parents informed that their child is involved with the EWO.
- Make contact with the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis to discuss attendance and highlight any concerns.
- Complete a register check on a 3-weekly basis.
- Make contact with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where concerns arise and complete referrals as appropriate, may be through CPOMS.
- Feed into EHA and Pre EHA
- Maintain an oversight of the penalty notices requested through the attendance officer and CBC.
- Liaise with the Local Authority EWS where legal proceedings have commenced.
- CME visits, casework and ad hoc home visits
- Completing CME Proformas and forward to the CME Co-ordinator.
- Advise school as to best practice and new regulations regarding attendance and child protection.
- Analysing attendance figures to provide useful information on attendance of individuals, groups and the whole Academy.
- Complete Monthly and Annual reports
- Provide attendance analysis reports where appropriate
- Complete the Irregular Attender Returns Form for each pupil who meets the Local Authority criteria and forward to the Local Authority EWS on a half termly basis as per the EWS code of conduct.

Principal – Attendance:

- Review attendance policy (in conjunction with the attendance officer and TSLT EWO) annually to ensure it is fit for purpose
- Line management of Senior Leader who oversees attendance
- Give attendance and punctuality a high profile.
- Meet regularly with the Attendance Officer
- Meet weekly with core and extended SLT to discuss key children and plans moving forward.
- Hold staff to account regarding their statutory obligations for attendance.
- Ensure that individual students, classes and houses are aware of their attendance.
- Liaise with/work alongside the EWO in producing an annual attendance action plan.
- Hold an overview of attendance at The Linden Academy, including the attendance of groups and interventions to improve academy attendance.
- Feedback to The Trust Compliance panel on the above
- Liaise with the safeguarding lead to ensure protocols adhere to the Keeping Children safe in Education statutory guidance (2023)



Phasing in of returning absentees

Where a student has been absent for an extended period, and if parents/carers and the child desire it, a phased return may be organised by the attendance officer, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, Safeguarding/Family Support Worker and other agencies where appropriate.

Term Time Leave (Please see term-time absence policy)

The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as 'rare and unavoidable situations or events that may temporarily prevent a student from attending classes regularly.'

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via reception staff. The Principal will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. See more details of this at the bottom of the document.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.



Looked After Children

All Looked after Children will have the LAC Coordinator for support. Where attendance issues arise with Looked after Children the Attendance Officer or EWO will liaise with the LAC coordinator to decide together how to proceed.

Religious Observance

The Academy will follow the guidelines set by the government and the CBC Access and Inclusion Service with regard to matters relating to religious observance and attendance. School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities November (2016) state that:

“Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents’ religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.”

Bearing the above in mind the following will apply:

- In all cases, e.g. Eid, (unless advised otherwise by the access and inclusion service) one day will be authorised and coded ‘R’.
- Any additional days will have to be requested in advance, and a reason for the request provided.
- The Academy will then decide whether the request is reasonable and should be granted.
- Any further agreed days will be coded ‘C’.
- Any further days that a student takes which have not been authorised by the Academy will be marked as unauthorised absences.
- The Academy will not generally authorise additional days retrospectively.

Circumstances where the Academy will not authorise additional days include:

- To go shopping prior to the religious observance day.
- To prepare food etc for the day.
- To ‘recover’ after festivities.
- To pick up/drop off relatives at the airport.

As with all authorised absence, the Academy will, wherever possible, look at the individual circumstances and may consider the student’s attendance record when deciding whether to authorise additional days.