



LYDIARD PARK ACADEMY

Attendance Policy 2023-25

Version Control

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Introduction

At Lydiard Park Academy we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Our school fulfils its responsibilities as laid out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

Lydiard Park Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. Only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. **The pupils with the highest attainment at Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.**

The whole school community (pupils, parents & carers, teaching & support staff and school governors) have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and all have important roles to play.

Lydiard Park Academy recognises the important role that school attendance plays in safeguarding pupils, realising that unexplained absences can put a child at risk, as can significant absences over a longer period of time.

We expect all of our pupils to aspire to 100% attendance and appreciate the full support of parents and carers in encouraging this. The minimum level of attendance at Lydiard Park Academy is 95%. The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting their targets.

Aims of the Policy

This policy is intended to continue to improve the attendance and punctuality of all pupils at Lydiard Park Academy by:

- a. Ensuring that good attendance and punctuality are priorities for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, carers and staff;
- b. Providing a framework which defines the respective roles and responsibilities of all interested parties and ensures consistency in dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality;
- c. Ensuring the maintenance of accurate registers which allows the school to account for the whereabouts of each pupil at any given time;
- d. Gathering of reliable data in line with Authority and Government guidelines for the purposes of reporting on individual and whole school attendance.

The Legal Framework

Regular school attendance of children of compulsory school age is the responsibility of the parent/carers and is a legal requirement in accordance with section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. Parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to comply with this legislation and legal action can be instigated.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. Lydiard Park Academy has an effective system of incentives and rewards, which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and appropriately challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Parents

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and allowing your child to be absent from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Failing to attend Lydiard Park Academy on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter. Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence. Parents cannot approve absences.

We expect parents/carers to recognise the importance of regular attendance at school and seek their support in:

- Ensuring that their child attends school every day
- Ensuring that their child arrives on time
- Keeping school informed of a pupil's absence (see absence procedures for details)
- Attend all meetings arranged regarding attendance and punctuality
- Attending Parents Consultation Days

School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance, and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team, will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available and relevant issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. Parents will regularly be reminded about the legal requirement for, and the importance of good school attendance. The Leader/s for

Disadvantaged Pupils will work together with the Pastoral Teams to support attendance monitoring and promote improvement with those registered as disadvantaged.

By law, schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance, or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended. The decision about whether any absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school and not with parents.

Lydiard Park Academy recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be damaging to a young person's education.

Lydiard Park Academy uses individual lesson registers, in addition to the statutory morning and afternoon registers to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of all pupils.

The Pastoral Teams will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task correctly. The school will ensure the attendance register is marked accurately. Classroom teachers and tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers, and the pastoral support advisor will ensure the correct codes are in place.

Attendance Procedures

At Lydiard Park Academy, parents are expected to inform the school at the earliest opportunity of their child's absence. This should be done by telephoning or emailing ask@lydiardparkacademy.org.uk. If parents have not contacted the school, the school will contact parents, and will continue to do so until contact is made. If school is unable to contact the parent, they will try all other contacts they hold on record, in order of priority until contact is established.

If an illness is prolonged, parents are asked to keep the school informed daily of progress and provide medical evidence. Parents are also requested to contact the school, in advance to request any arranged absences, such as a hospital appointment or dentist. However, we request that as many routine appointments as possible are arranged out of school hours.

If your child is absent, you must:

1. On the first day of absence, contact the school as soon as possible on 01793 874224 selecting the absence option and leaving a message. Please leave a clear message that states your son/daughter's name plus their tutor group and reason for absence and the date they are expected to return to school.

2. On the first day they return, send in a note with an explanation of the absence – this must be done even if you have already telephoned us. This should be a signed and dated letter.
3. If you are unable to ring or email, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you as soon as possible. You can also reply to the email sent to you by the school.

If your child is absent, we will:

1. Telephone or send an automated notification to you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. This system is known as ‘First Day Calling’.
2. If Lydiard Park Academy is concerned about your child’s attendance a member of the SLT or attendance team may visit you (depending on level of risk).

The above protocols apply to all absences. Should a pupil’s attendance fall below 95% then a series of additional actions will be implemented to monitor and address all attendance concerns. Details of these are detailed later in the policy.

Morning Registration

Pupils should arrive ready for registration to begin at 8.40am (Monday and Friday) and 8.30am (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday). Registers taken are the official registers for the morning session. Form tutors will mark the register promptly. The accuracy of this mark is vital to all the other parts of the attendance procedures.

Pupils who arrive after 8.40am and before 09.10am on Monday and Friday will be marked late on the register and will be given an after-school detention of 60 minutes the next school day.

Pupils who arrive after 8.30am and before 09.00am on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday will be marked late on the register and will be given an after-school detention of 60 minutes the next school day.

Pupils who sign in at reception after 9.10am (Monday and Friday) or after 9.00am (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) will be marked absent, and will be required to bring a note of explanation. These are the times the registers formally close. The absence will be coded as unauthorised (U – late after registers have closed) and a late detention will be issued; this excessive lateness will affect the percentage of attendance and leave parent/carer at risk of a fine.

Once the morning attendance register has been closed, the pastoral support advisor for each year group will complete the unexplained absence report. The main contact for each pupil who is absent will be contacted, either by telephone or email.

Afternoon Registration

Afternoon registration is taken at the beginning of session 4 which starts at 12.55pm. Class teachers will mark the register promptly. The accuracy of this mark is vital to all the other parts of the attendance procedures.

Pupils who are permitted to go home for lunch and return late back will be marked late on the register and issued with an after-school detention for the next school day. If a pupil is persistently late back to school from lunch then the lunch pass will be retracted.

Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised Absences

These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Absence can be authorised if:

- A pupil is absent with permission granted by the Principal
- A pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong
- The school at which the pupil is registered is not within walking distance of the pupil's home, and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for the pupil's transport to and from school
- A pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in the Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) are met
- There is a family bereavement
- A pupil is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or in connection with an application for a place at an institute of further or higher education, or for a place at another school (during Year 11, this can be recorded as an approved educational activity)
- A pupil is excluded
- A Year 11 pupil is granted study leave (not normally more than 15 days)
- A pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion

Unauthorised Absences

An absence will be unauthorised where the school does not consider the absence as reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. When attendance falls below 95% all absences will need to be supported by medical evidence. This type of absence can lead to the school using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Absence is unauthorised if:

- parents/carers keep children off school unnecessarily
- truancy occurs before or during the school day
- absences have never been properly explained or the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- pupil arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays that are taken in term time which have not been agreed
- a pupil fails to return after the period of time agreed by the school for a family holiday
- a pupil takes a holiday during term time
- medical evidence is not provided. Examples of medical evidence could be medical appointment slips, or medical prescription packaging or hospital appointment letters

Whilst any pupil may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Welfare checks are undertaken on students who have had 5 continuous days of absence (excluding those with hospital admissions), including those where the school has been informed of the absence by parent/carer. This is to ensure all children are regularly sighted. Any home visits undertaken result in CPOMs being submitted and Lydiard Park Academy's Home Visit Form being completed upon return to school.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

The Trustees, Governors and Principal do not support parents taking their children out of school for holidays.

Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school, and the Principal may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances include service personnel who are prevented from taking leave of absence outside term time at any point in the school year, or the terminal illness or bereavement of a parent or sibling if the absence is concurrent. A letter from an employer may be required to support restricted work annual leave.

If parents do wish to request leave of absence or Holidays in Term Time for such exceptional

circumstances, they should make a request in writing, in advance.

Requests for leave of absence will be looked at on a case-by-case basis and it is up to the discretion of the Principal to make a decision about whether a request may be considered an exceptional circumstance or not. The Principal will inform the parent in writing as to the decision made regarding the request.

If parents decide to take their children on holiday where the absence is unauthorised, the school will follow the Local Authority's Guidance for Schools on leave of absence during term time, and inform the Education Welfare Service who may, on behalf of the Local Authority, issue a fixed penalty notice. Information about fixed penalty notices is available below.

The Principal is advised to treat each application individually, and will consider the following factors when making a decision;

- The pupil's overall attendance record;
- Whether the absence falls during a year when public examinations are due or government tests;
- The effect on the pupil's continuity of learning;
- The family circumstances;
- Sibling attendance at other TPAT school (Principals will make a joint decision if there is a sibling attending another TPAT school).

When an absence is approved then it is an authorised absence. Should parents/carers keep their child away in excess of the agreed period, then the extra time will be treated as an unauthorised absence. An absence request for a holiday can only be made by the parent/carer with whom the pupil lives.

Leaving School Before the End of the School Day

It is not expected that pupils should need to leave early. However, in some exceptional circumstances, pupils may have to be collected early from school.

Parents/carers who wish to collect their children early must inform the school by telephone or in writing, stating clearly the reason why the child is leaving school.

Requests may only be made by the parent/carer with day-to-day care. This safeguards against an estranged parent/carer making a request without the knowledge of the parent who has care and control. If there are other arrangements in place for the child to leave the school premises, such as another adult will collect the child, the school must be informed in writing.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to keep the school fully aware of contact details of named and responsible adults.

Attendance Monitoring

Whole school attendance is monitored on a weekly basis and clear procedures are followed should there be any concerns. Lydiard Park Academy uses a staged approach to effectively manage pupil absence where attendance falls below 95% (where no medical/other evidence to support authorising absence has been provided):

Attendance Level 1 - under 95%

- A first attendance letter is sent home raising concerns that attendance has fallen below DfE expectations and is being monitored.
- Monitoring will take place weekly, over a minimum 12-week period. Should attendance fall below 90% during this period, progression to Attendance Level 2 will take place.

Attendance Level 2 - under 90%

- Level 2 letter sent home.
- If the next week there is little or no improvement in attendance school will arrange an Attendance Improvement Plan Meeting (AIPM) with parents to agree an action plan. This meeting will take place within 10 working days. Parents will be sent a written record of this meeting within 5 working days.
- If the parent does not attend the meeting, an opportunity will be given for a new date. On the second date the AIPM will be held with or without the parent present.
- Attendance will be reviewed by school in 4 weeks from the AIPM. During this period no absence will be authorised without supporting medical evidence. Following the meeting it is normal practice to expect 100% attendance.
- If there is little or no improvement at the review, parents will be invited into school for a Review AIPM where a revised plan is agreed. At this stage parents can be sent a Penalty Notice Warning Letter warning against future unauthorised absences within a set timeframe. See below for more information.

Attendance Level 3 - under 85%

- Referral to Early Help Hub Team where an Early Help Assessment will be completed and will be referred to EHH – Mash Team.
- If following the Review AIPM there is still no improvement in attendance, a referral will be made to the Educational Referral Team.
- The Educational Referral Team will consider instigating legal proceedings by consulting/referring to the relevant Local Authority.

Penalty Notices

Section 444A and section 444B of the Education Act 1996 give powers to the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices where a parent or carer is considered capable of, but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

Penalty Notices are issued for absence taken during term time where the leave of absence has not been authorised by the school, or an absence has not been requested in advance

and the pupil has had a minimum of 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised leave of absence during the previous six months up to and including the day the Educational Welfare Service is notified.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and is used to try and secure an improvement in a pupil's school attendance without the need to appear in Court. As long as the penalty is paid the Penalty Notice enables parents or carers to discharge their potential liability for prosecution for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

Payment of £120 is required within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice; this sum is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days the Local Authority is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of your child's poor school attendance.

Removal from School Roll

A pupil will be removed from the school roll in accordance with the regulations in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations of 2006. These regulations include when:

- Parents make a written request to the school to home school their child;
- Parents make a written request for a change of school, and the receiving school confirms that they have started;
- They have been on a managed move and the school they are attending has agreed to take them on roll;
- They have left at the end of Year 11;
- They have been continually absent from school for a period of not less than 4 weeks and both the school and the Local Education Authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil. This follows the Child Missing Education procedures;
- They are from the Traveller community and have been continually absent for a period of not less than 4 weeks;
- The family have moved out of commutable distance.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Mark the registers in accordance with the law twice a day;
- Inform any parents/carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day;
- Maintain records and monitor attendance of pupils on a regular basis;
- Authorise absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that only the Principal and/or Head of Year can authorise absence;
- Contact parents/carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and/or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns;
- Provide reintegration support for pupils returning from long-term absence;
- Maintain a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards;
- Work with relevant external agencies if a pupils' attendance becomes a concern, i.e.,

Social Care, CAMHS, Education Welfare Service and The Police.

Support Systems

Lydiard Park Academy recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. School will work with pupils and parent/carers to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships, and working together to put the right support in place.

Lydiard Park Academy also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and looked after children. School will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include;

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Counselling
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Pupil Voice activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages

Particular focus will be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partner agencies.

Where absence means pupils have missed 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), the school will work together with pupils and parents/carers to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Support offered to families will be child centered, and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and pupils. Where engagement fails or is refused with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, legal sanctions will be considered.

Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

How Data is used

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with Governors and Trustees.

Children Missing in Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff in education provision should follow the provision's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in the future.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential, pupils need to attend regularly. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Lydiard Park Academy will maintain admissions and attendance registers. All pupils will be placed on both registers. The schools will use the national absence and attendance codes to

record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulations.

Lydiard Park Academy will promote good school attendance and put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing in education.

Lydiard Park Academy will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or who has been absent, without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Lydiard Park Academy will follow agreed safeguarding and child protection procedures where it is suspected that children missing from education are suffering from abuse or neglect. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police will be involved.