

# Leigh UTC Dartford

## Attendance Policy

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### Statement of Intent

Leigh UTC Dartford is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. We incorporate our IB learner attributes to promote good attendance these include Balanced, Principled and Reflective

The Governors, Principal and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Leigh UTC Dartford. In module 4 and 5 we will have a governor hearing for pupils who have fallen between 86% and 90%.

Working together guidelines parent friendly DFE 2024 link.

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2022/12/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance.pdf>

### Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the

child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.**

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.25am. If pupils arrive late this must be reported by their parents or a 40-minute late detention will be set for the following day, Pupils are required to sign in on the InVentry system in reception.

### **The Role of the School Staff**

At Leigh UTC Dartford there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

Kathryn Pamphlett has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues [Kathryn.Pamphlett@utcdartford.latrust.org.uk](mailto:Kathryn.Pamphlett@utcdartford.latrust.org.uk) for any attendance issues please contact 01322 626600 selecting option 1 attendance line or text 07860054465.

Class teachers or PD mentors complete a register at the beginning of each lesson. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The attendance officer will then contact parents if they have not already contacted school to inform them of the absence.

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by phone call.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (see National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are able to monitor their child's attendance using MCAS and this is reported home following our reporting schedule.
- Home visits and welfare checks

### **Timeline of the Staged Approach for Managing Poor Attendance**

- 95 - 100% attendance – Attendance Officer to investigate and notify parents of concerns if appropriate.
- 90 - 95% attendance - school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Below 90% referral to the Trust Attendance and Welfare Officer.
- Where the level of absence has not improved and below 90% with recent unauthorised absences for 10 days or more, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
- For the cases that require intensive family support and have fallen below 80% with no evidence, the school will make an Early Help Notification.

## **Children Missing Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Principle and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her by
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

## **Times of the day**

	Y8/9/10	Y7/11/12/13	
8:20-9:00	Line up and Tutor	Tutor (and line up for Y7)	
9:00 - 10.05	P1	P1	Y7 pupils will gather before school on the playground and have break (11:10) and lunch time (13:40) on the IA playground and in the IA canteen.
10.05 - 10.25	Break	P2	Y8 pupils will gather before school on the playground and have break (10:05) and lunch time (12:35) on the IA playground and in the IA canteen.
10.25-11.10	P2	Break	Y9 pupils will gather before school on the left playground and have break (10:05) and lunch time (12:35) on the left playground and UTC canteen (shared with Y10)
11:10 - 11:30			Y10 pupils will gather before school on the right playground and have break (10:05) and lunch time (12:35) on the right playground and soft seating (canteen shared with Y9).
11:30 - 12:35	P3	P3	
12:35 - 13:05	Lunch	P4	Y11 pupils will gather before school in the UTC restaurant. We would like to make this time productive with KO quizzing and online platforms happening. Y11 will have break (11:10) and lunch time (13:40) on the UTC right playground and UTC soft seating (Canteen shared with Y12/13).
13:05 - 13:40	P4		
13:40 - 14:10	Lunch	Y12/13 pupils will gather before school in the P16 study area and soft seating area (working area, KOs/online platforms) and have break (11:10) and lunch time (13:40) on the UTC left playground and UTC soft seating. Y12/13 will be allowed off site at break and lunch if their conduct on site is good during the first module.	
14:10 - 15:15	P5	P5	

The register will close at 9am and 1pm or 2pm depending on year group. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

## **Authorising Absence**

Only the Principal can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Principal is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will NOT be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

## **Education for Health Needs Including Mental Health**

The Academy will operate according to its statutory duties under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and DFE: Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school ([DFE: Education for children with health needs who cannot attend ...](#)). The Academy will refer to the Local Authority regarding alternative provision where a student cannot attend school full-time for 15 days or more, consecutive or otherwise, due to a physical or mental health need and cannot access full-time education. Under the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#), a school may only remove the name of a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from its roll in specific circumstances, which include where: - the pupil has been certified by a medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and - 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.

## **Local Authority Action may include:-**

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies

- Fast Track to Prosecution

## **Penalty Notices Proceedings**

Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool.

Therefore, from autumn term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued a further penalty notice can be issued, but in most cases it would not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.

For the purpose of the escalation process, previous penalty notices include those not paid (including where prosecution was taken forward and the parent pleaded or was found guilty) but not those which were withdrawn.

In cases where a pupil has moved school or local authority area in the previous 3 years an additional check should be made to try and ascertain whether previous penalty notices have been issued to the parent in respect of the pupil. Where the pupil's previous school was in the same local authority area this check will be simple. If the pupil has moved between local authorities in the previous 3 years and the previous local authority(ies) is known they should be contacted to check whether a penalty notice has been issued to that parent for that pupil in the previous 3 years. These checks can be made by the school and/or local authority depending on the agreed local process. In cases where the previous local authority is not known or the information cannot be, or is not, provided by the previous local authority, it should be assumed that the parent has not previously received a penalty notice and the escalation process started as a new case.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Principal may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Principal’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Unauthorised absence may result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Inclusion and Attendance Service to parents for each child absent from school without permission.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

## **Removing a Pupil from the Academy Roll**

### Continued Serious Absence

As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, 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. (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

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. (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

## Appendix 1 DfE Registration Codes

### Authorised codes

- / Present (AM) \ Present (PM)
- L Late (before registers closed)
- K Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- V Educational visit or trip
- P Approved sporting activity
- W Work experience
- B Educated off site (NOT at an alternative provision)
- D Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)

### Authorised absences

- C1 Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
- M Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
- J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
- T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- R: Religious observance
- I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
- E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
- Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
- Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
- Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

### Unauthorised absence

- G: Holiday not granted by the school
- N: Reason for absence not yet established
- O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances
- U: Arrived in school after registration closed

### Administrative codes

- Z Student not yet on roll
- # School closed to pupils

100%	99%	98%	90%	84%	80%	74%		
190 School days a year	186 days of education	182 days of education	171 days of education	160 days of education	152 days of education	140 days of education		
0 days off school in a year	4 days off in a school year	8 days off in a school year	19 days off in a school year	30 days off in a school year	38 days off in a school year	50 days off in a school year		
Research suggests that your child would now be failing 1-2 grades below their potential			Your child would have missed 6 weeks of Education			Research suggests that your child would now be failing 2-3 grades below their potential		
Amazing! Your attendance is on track			<u>Concerning.</u> You are now classed as 'Persistent Absentee'		<b><u>Serious concern.</u></b> The local authority will be moving towards court action			