



Student Attendance Policy

Date of Policy Draft: October 2021

Member of staff creating policy: Helen Manyanya (Deputy Principal)

Approval from Principal: November 2021

Date of next review: November 2022

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Key Staff

Chair of Governors Katie Parlett

Principal Emma Sullivan

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Family Liaison Officer Chelsey Schofield

Introduction and Statement of Intent

Under the 1999 Education Act, parents are responsible for ensuring that young people of compulsory school age receive full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their children's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

The DFE advice on school attendance August 2020 and the Addendum September 2021 have been consulted before reviewing this policy.

The Family Liaison officer will regularly check the attendance of students and will follow up students' absence with their parents. We hope that parents will assist us in our work of raising attendance levels throughout the school by:

Ensuring the regular attendance of their young person

- Informing the school when their young person is absent from school
- Providing a reason for the absence
- Attending any meetings about their young person's attendance, where necessary

Lighthouse School believes that good attendance is vital for all students if they are to gain the most from education. The intent of this policy is to promote good attendance in school and to enable all students to make sustained progress towards their Educational Health Care Plan and academic targets. Lighthouse School sees good attendance as an essential life skill, preparing young people for the world of work, and understanding the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

Lighthouse School encourages all students to have at least 90% attendance across the school year, and recognises that students with an Educational Health and Care Plan may face medical and mental health issues that make attendance at school more difficult. Lighthouse School is keen to work with parents to support their young person to enjoy their education.

Policy Summary

- It is parents' responsibility to ensure that their child attends school full time
- Parents should not send their child to school if they have been diagnosed with, or are showing symptoms of a communicable disease
- Parents should contact school as soon as possible if their child is going to be absent for the day
- Lighthouse School will liaise with parents to maximise attendance at school, and may put in place an Action Plan or contact external agencies, as required, to support students
- Authorisation for absence from school is at the discretion of the Principal
- Term time absence is not routinely authorised, however, parents can request time out of school in exceptional circumstances
- Communication between home and school is crucial in supporting students' educational outcomes

Absence Procedures

Illness

Parents/carers should use their best judgement when deciding if they are well enough to attend school.

- If your young person has had diarrhoea and vomiting they should not attend school for 48 hours (2 full days) from the last episode
- If your young person has a contagious condition that could be passed on to other young people, please keep them at home (e.g. Covid-19, measles, chicken pox, impetigo, scabies)
- If your young person has moderate symptoms of a cold, and they are unable to manage these (e.g. excessive coughing, sneezing and unable to use tissues) or this is significantly impacting their concentration levels, then please ring school for advice on whether to bring them into school

Mental Health

If parents/carers feel their young person is unable to attend school due to a mental health issue please inform the school. Lighthouse School will work with the young person and their family to support their health needs. To enable us to offer full support the school will request evidence, to confirm the diagnosis and treatment, from a medical professional body such as a GP or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Other Reasons for Absence (not pre-planned)

Lighthouse School recognises that there are times when it is acceptable for students to be absent from school, other than for illness. When possible, these should be requested in advance (see section on Term Time Absence – page 9), however, if this is not possible, Lighthouse School will discuss whether the absence is authorised with the parent.

Lighthouse School will routinely authorise:

- bereavement
- family crisis

Lighthouse School will not routinely authorise:

- birthday or other celebrations
- attendance at local events (e.g. Great Yorkshire Show)
- not sleeping the night before

Informing the School of Absence

Student absence should be reported to school via the main school telephone number (0113 457 0605) before 8.00am, giving the reason for absence. The school will record this information on the young person's record.

It is the parent/carers responsibility to inform transport of the absence.

This process must also be followed for each consecutive day of absence unless school is in receipt of a medical certificate

If a student has not arrived in school by 9:15 and no communication has been received, the school will attempt to contact parents/carers using the emergency contact numbers held on our school system. **It is important that parents/carers inform school if there are any changes in these details during the school year.**

Under the circumstance where there is no reply, a home visit may be made that day to ensure that both the young person and the parents/carers are safe and well.

If school are unable to make contact staff may contact Leeds (or other relevant Local Authority) Safeguarding Team (Duty and Advice) for advice and may speak to the Duty Social Worker.

Recording of Absence from School

All absence from school will initially be recorded as N (see appendix 1), until a reason has been offered by parents and absence authorised by school.

If no reason is given by the end of the school day, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical evidence may be required for appointments made during the school day.

Authorised exceptional circumstances will be recorded as C.

Students Who Become Unwell at School

If a student is feeling unwell at school, and the symptoms are related to a communicable disease (such as Covid-19) the teacher/lead will arrange for the student to be isolated whilst parents are contacted. The student will be monitored and support at all times.

If a student is feeling unwell at school, and the symptoms are not related to a communicable disease (such as Covid-19) the student will be assessed by a first aider, and one of the following actions will be taken:

- if the student is well enough to remain in school they will be monitored by key staff and supported to return to lessons, parents will be informed as necessary
- if the student is not well enough to remain in school, ELT will arrange for parents to be contacted to collect as soon as possible
- if the student has medication relating to their illness in school this will be administered in line with school policy and parents will be notified

If appropriate, and as severity demands, the school will call 999 and take advice from health professionals. Parents will be contacted and, if required, the student will be accompanied to hospital.

Late arrival to school

Students who miss transport

It is parents' responsibility to ensure that students arrive at school, . If a young person misses their transport, parents should make alternative arrangements to ensure they arrive at school.

Other reasons for late arrival

Parents should ring and inform school upon the event of late arrival to school as soon as possible.

Students will be marked as L if they arrive after 09.15. Students will be marked as present if they arrive before 09.15.

Students should be brought to the main gate, and a member of staff will meet them and ensure they are escorted to their lesson.

Managing Attendance Concerns

Internal Absence from lessons

The lead member of staff will take a register at the start of each lesson. If a student is absent from the lesson, but marked present in school, the Wellbeing Team will be alerted, and the absence investigated to ensure that the student is safe and well. If absences develop a pattern or become persistent, this will be investigated, and interventions put in place to support the student to return to the classroom.

Persistent Absence from School

The Department for Education classifies any student with less than 90% as being a persistent absentee. All schools are required to report on the percentage of students who are persistently absent, and to track, monitor and support these students.

The Family Liaison Officer will contact parents if the student is identified as persistently absent, either with authorised or unauthorised absence. There will be a discussion about the next steps that could be put in place, which will include any relevant members of staff and parents. The student will be included in this, if possible.

An Action Plan will be put in place, which will include time limited targets, agreed between home and school, and, if relevant, linked to the student's EHCP. Lighthouse School may make referrals to external agencies in order to ensure there is adequate support for the student to engage in full time education.

If there is no improvement, or the Action Plan is not successful, Lighthouse School may call an emergency EHCP review, to discuss whether the school is able to meet the needs of the student.

Students Not Collected

Parents/carers should make the school office aware as soon as possible if there is an issue collecting their child at the end of the school day. The school will be able to make infrequent arrangements to support until parents/carers are able to collect.

If the student refuses to get on school transport, Lighthouse School will contact the parents/carers as soon as possible, using all available emergency contacts.

Lighthouse School may contact Leeds Safeguarding Duty and Advice Team if a student is not collected from school regularly, or if the school is unable to contact parents/carers to collect.

Children Missing Education

Lighthouse School will make all reasonable attempts to contact parents/carers of students who are not attending school, and are not being provided with suitable alternative educational provision. Lighthouse School will refer these students to the Local Authority as Children Missing Education. SENSAP will also be advised of the absence. This may lead to the removal of Lighthouse School as the named school on the students EHCP, and the student being taken off-roll.

Applications for Absence During School Time

In exceptional circumstances absence may be authorised during school time. It is the Principal's decision to authorise a request for term-time absence.

Parents/carers should make a formal request to the Principal stating the reason for the absence, the period of time the absence will cover and any mitigating circumstances. This request must be made in writing (see appendix 2).

Lighthouse School will not routinely authorise:

- family holidays
- leisure activities

Lighthouse School may authorise:

- representative events (such as sport or music events)
- recognised religious observances
- attendance at major family events (such as weddings or funerals)
- attendance at interview for further education or work

Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss any upcoming requests in advance and before booking. Parents/carers can be fined for unauthorised absence of their children during term time.

Absence During a Major Epidemic

Lighthouse School will follow government guidance on dealing with absence in the event of a major epidemic or pandemic.

This will be communicated to parents and carers, and information will be placed on the school website.

Traveller Children

It is expected that Traveller children will attend school as regularly as possible. To protect traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

Lighthouse School will authorise a student's travelling patterns as long as:

- the family have informed Lighthouse School of their traveller status
- the family advise of the travelling patterns before they happen
- the student will be able to meet the minimum number of attendance (as above)

Other Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional Closure

In the event of a partial or whole school closure, for example due to dangerous weather conditions, students will be marked with #. This is excluded from the students' attendance records.

Not Required in School

Students will be marked with Z for those days that they have not attended if they begin part way through a school year.

If the school has a 'staggered start', students will be marked as # on those days in which they are not required to be in school

These codes are not included in the students' attendance records.

Coronavirus

Students who are self-isolating due to government guidance will be marked as X. This does not count in their attendance record.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

Reason	Code	Authorised/Attendance
Present at school	/(am) \ (pm)	Authorised attendance
Late before the register closes	L	Authorised attendance
Present at an off-site educational activity	B	Authorised attendance
Dial registered at another educational establishment	D	Authorised attendance
At an interview for education or employment	J	Authorised attendance
Participating in a supervised sporting event	P	Authorised attendance
Educational trip or visit	V	Authorised attendance
Work experience	W	Authorised attendance
Authorised leave of absence from school	C	Authorised absence
Excluded with no alternative provision	E	Authorised absence
Holiday authorised by the school	H	Authorised absence
Medical or dental appointment	M	Authorised absence
Religious observance	R	Authorised absence
Study leave	S	Authorised absence
Gypsy, Romany and Traveller absence	T	Authorised absence
Holiday not authorised by the school	G	Unauthorised absence
No reason yet given for absence	N	Unauthorised absence
Absent without authorisation	O	Unauthorised absence
Late after the register closes	U	Unauthorised absence
Not attending in circumstances relating to Coronavirus	X	Not included
Not required to be in school	X	Not included
Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Y	Not included
Student not on admission register	Z	Not included
Partial or whole school closure	#	Not included

Appendix 2 – Sample letter for requesting term time absence



Date

Dear Principal,

RE: Request for authorised absence during term time.

I respectfully request for my child be permitted to miss school for ... days.

First day of absence	dd/mm/yyyy
Final day of absence	dd/mm/yyyy
Date returning to school	dd/mm/yyyy

The exceptional circumstances and reasons for this request are:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Yours Sincerely

Signed parent / carer.