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**Launde Primary School**

**Attendance Strategy**

**Attendance Lead: Mrs S Meer, Deputyheadteacher**

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At Launde Primary School, our school community strives to provide a safe, warm and caring environment where pupils and teachers can work together to achieve high standards in every area of school life.

Our school ethos underpins these principles and supports staff, pupils and families in maintaining a good level of attendance through a variety of ways that are outlined in this policy.

We recognise that good attendance is essential for high standards and pupil attainment and therefore expect our pupils to attend school regularly and on time in order to maximise their learning and reach their true potential. Evidence shows that children who attend school regularly are more likely to:

* make better progress academically and socially
* find school routines and school work easier to cope with
* maintain closer friendships with other children

‘Pupils who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to under achieve and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour’ (Department for Education).

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent or carer.

**Our aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

* Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including reducing persistent absence
* Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
* Acting early to address patterns of absence
* Achieve attendance levels of **96% and above** across the school

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Recording Attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

* Present
* Attending an approved off-site educational activity
* Absent
* Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

* The original entry
* The amended entry
* The reason for the amendment
* The date on which the amendment was made
* The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at the beginning of the afternoon session and will be kept open for 5 minutes.

Unplanned absence

The pupil’s parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible. They can phone the school office, e-mail the school or leave a message on the school’s absence line.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil’s parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor’s note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil’s parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil’s parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. There is a form designed for parents for this purpose.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

* Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
* After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Lateness and punctuality are monitored by the senior leaders, Parent Officer and class teachers.

Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

* Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephone
* Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
* Identify whether the absence is approved or not
* Identify the correct attendance code to use

Reporting to parents

Parents will be informed about their child’s attendance through the following:

* Termly reports
* Annual reports
* Through a letter if attendance falls below 95%
* Through a letter and personal call if attendance falls below 85%

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher’s discretion.

We define ‘exceptional circumstances’. There are very few occasions when an absence would be considered exceptional.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

* Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
* Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Reducing persistent absence

Attendance is monitored on a fortnightly basis. Contact is made with the families where a pattern and/or trends of absenteeism is seen or where absence falls below expected level. Where a child is considered to be persistently absent, the parent officer and/or senior leaders will contact the family and support them to address the barrier to the child attending school. This could be through regular contact, referral to outside agency support or talking to the child directly. The strategies that will be put in place will be child specific so as to address the child’s individual needs which could support the family and child in reducing the barrier such as financial, social, illness, family circumstance etc.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents 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 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 headteacher, 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.

# Strategies for promoting attendance

# At Launde Primary School, we promote attendance through a variety of ways:

* A weekly attendance certificate and trophy are given out on a Friday afternoon to a class in Key Stage 1 and a class in Key Stage 2 who have the highest attendance in the week.
* There is an attendance prize for the class in Key Stage 1 and a class in Key Stage 2 who have the highest attendance over the year. This can be a visit to the cinema or equivalent fun experience.
* Where there is a particular concern in a year group, other strategies are considered and implemented to praise full attendance such as attendance stickers, merits, class points
* At the end of the year, a book voucher is given to every child who has good attendance. £5 for those who have achieved 99% attendance, £10 for those who have attached 100% attendance. These are presented in a whole school assembly.

# Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a fortnightly basis.

A pupil’s parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil’s absence goes above 10 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil’s absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be 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 the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

# Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

* Implementation of this policy at the school monitoring school-level absence data
* Reporting absence figures and termly updates to governors
* Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
* Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Attendance Lead supported by the Parent Officer

The Attendance Lead completed the following:

* Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
* Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
* Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
* Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

**Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

School office staff

School office staff are expected to:

* take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
* follow up with phone calls if there is a child with whom there has been no contact from parent and they are not in school.
* Inform a senior leader where no contact can be made

# Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies: Child protection and safeguarding policy, Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **/** | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| **\** | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| **L** | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| **B** | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| **D** | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| **J** | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| **P** | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| **V** | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| **W** | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **Authorised absence** |
| **C** | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| **E** | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| **H** | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| **I** | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| **M** | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| **R** | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| **S** | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| **T** | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| **Unauthorised absence** |
| **G** | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| **N** | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| **U** | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

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| **Code** | **Definition** | **Scenario** |
| **X** | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| **Y** | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| **Z** | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| **#** | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |