

Lacon Childe School

Attendance Policy - Parents/Carers

Version Control

Policy author: Kristien Wood
Policy approved by: Local Governing Body
Next policy review date: Autumn 2025

Version	Date	Details
1.0	Summer 2024	Policy written

Not only do schools equip children with the knowledge and qualifications they need for later life, but they are also places where children make friends, learn new hobbies, and build on their ambitions for the future. If we want to offer every child the best chance in life, it must start with ensuring that they can regularly attend school.

Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner 2023

At Lacon Childe School we are committed to supporting all our children and young people to attend school every day as we recognise that being around friends and teachers is the best way for students to learn and reach their potential. We strongly believe that education is a right and we know that if we want to give our students the best start in life, we must ensure that we work alongside our families and other stakeholders to break down the barriers and challenges facing our young people. Being in school is important to every child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Time in school keeps students safe as well as providing them with access to both ongoing pastoral and academic support. Plus, [evidence](#) shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results. (Department for Education May 2023)

As parents/carers, you have a legal duty to ensure your child receives a full time-education. We ask you to work with us to promote and reward good attendance and punctuality. You play a vital role in supporting your child to access their education by fostering a culture of commitment to learning. You are responsible for ensuring your child's regular and on-time attendance, which not only supports their academic progress but also instils essential life skills. The following government guide is a source of good information for parents. [Parents Guide](#).

Sometimes your child may not want to attend school. We understand this and we encourage parents/carers and students to be open and honest with us about the reasons for absence. If your child does not want to attend school, it is never better to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to let your child stay at home. This can give the impression to your child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why your child may not want to attend school so we can support you and your child in the best way possible. For students with medical conditions or other circumstances that may at times prevent regular attendance, we will fully support each student to be able to attend as much as possible. Our school will use an individual health plan and will work alongside other relevant professionals such as health colleagues, and yourselves, to best support them.

There are only a small number of circumstances where missing a school day is permitted. Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on a specific day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot go to school on a specific day because they are observing a religious event.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available or has not been provided yet.
- Your child does not have a permanent address and you are required to travel for work. This exception only applies if your child attends their usual school or another school where you are staying as often as possible. This must be 200 half days or more a year if they are aged 6 or older.

Lacon Childe School

Attendance Policy - Parents/Carers

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent. We encourage families to contact the schools and speak to form tutors, heads of year, and pastoral support staff to discuss any concerns that you may have around your child's attendance. You can access their contact details [Here](#).

Contact details and reporting an absence.

Attendance at Lacon Childe School is overseen by the following members of staff:

- Mr Wood, Assistant Head and Attendance Lead Kristien.wood@laconchildeschool.co.uk
- Mrs Howells, Attendance Officer attendance@laconchildeschool.co.uk

The times of the school day are shown in the table below and we ask that you support your child to be in school on time every day. We ask that if your child cannot attend school on a particular day, you leave a voice message on the answer phone service detailing student name, form group and reasons for absence (**01299 270312**), contact our attendance officer or email attendance@laconchildeschool.co.uk by 8.45am, to report the absence. We ask that this procedure is repeated for any subsequent days' absence in line with safeguarding requirements.

Tutor time	8.45 – 9.10
Period 1	9.10 – 10.10
Period 2	10.10 – 11.10
Break	11.10 – 11.30
Period 3	11.30 – 12.30
Period 4	12.30 – 13.30
Lunch/Tutor time	13.20 – 14.10
Period 5	14.10 – 15.15

We believe that children need to develop good habits and be on time for school and every lesson. Persistent lateness can lead to fixed penalty notices for parents/carers. It is our policy to keep our registers open for 25 minutes from the start of school. Late arrival before the register has closed will be marked as Code L and will count as present. A child arriving after the register has closed at 9.10am will be marked absent for the morning session with Code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Our attendance administrator checks the registers and if a student is absent after registers have closed at 9.10am and no communication has been received then we will contact you via telephone or via text or email. If we cannot establish the reason for the absence, we will classify the absence as unauthorised.

If we are unable to contact you after two days and have no information as to the whereabouts of your child, we will undertake a home visit. We always follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries e.g. discussions with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), relatives, landlords etc to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm. We inform the local authority of any student who has missed ten school days or more without permission and when appropriate, the school's DSL will make a referral to social services and/or police.

We ask all parents/carers to provide us with more than one emergency contact number. This gives us additional options to contact a responsible adult to establish the reason behind the absence. Our Attendance Officer prioritises phone calls and home visits for key children. As part of our school's offsite/alternative provision protocols, schools make daily contact with alternative providers to ensure children have arrived at their placement. Absences are then pursued to fulfil safeguarding duties.

Our school has a duty to safeguard the welfare of all students and so any concerns about a child's attendance will be investigated promptly to ensure support for their well-being and safety. All unexplained or extended absences will trigger safeguarding procedures, which will include home visits and communication with relevant agencies. Where we have safeguarding concerns about a child who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary to ensure a child's safety and well-being. Parents/carers should refer to The Shropshire Gateway Education Trust Safeguarding Policy found on our website. If we are unable to work in partnership with you as parents/carers, we may refer to the Local

Lacon Childe School

Attendance Policy - Parents/Carers

Authority. We will only ever do this if everything else has failed.

Holidays during term time

Please note, under recent amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) regulations, 2006, headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school's term dates are published a year in advance and are made available on our website with the expectation that parents/carers will ensure that holidays are taken during school holiday times. Parents/carers who would like to request a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances should complete a 'request for pupil leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances' form which is available from school reception, this should be returned to the headteacher in advance of the leave. Applications for leave of absence (see appendix 2), which are made and refused, will result in the absence being unauthorised, which may result in legal action against parents/carers, by Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

Supporting you and your child

We are dedicated to child-centred actions and establishing a collective responsibility for attendance and recognise that pressure that non-attendance can put on families. We work collectively, both with our Trust schools, other local schools, and the Local Authority to share best practice to address attendance issues effectively, implement strategies such as early intervention, support for families, access to mental health support, as well as creating a positive and inclusive school environment. We encourage our parents/carers to communicate with us to ensure we have the right knowledge to support our young people. We are reflective and regularly review our approach and support to ensure we are providing the best possible targeted care for our children and families.

Our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) ensures comprehensive attendance intervention for all our children and young people. The system incorporates staff, children/young people, parent/carers, and external agencies and is completely aligned with Department for Education (DFE) guidelines.

Our school systems of support to remove barriers to attendance consist of three tiers:

- **Tier 1 Universal school wide strategies:** provides a universal offer to all our children and young people including, for example; provision for students who may need to be dropped off earlier, the administration of medication as and when this is required and opportunities to talk about concerns with form tutors and extended members of the pastoral team.
- **Tier 2 Individualised strategies:** provides early internal support and intervention that may include, for example, Form tutors and Year leaders as a mentor, the setting of short-term targets and incentivised goals via the Individualise Attendance Plan (See appendix 3).
- **Tier 3 Intermediate needs strategies:** provides higher levels of support for children, young people, and families who require access to external agency support for example, involvement from; school-based family liaison and school attendance lead.
- **Tier 4 Higher needs strategies:** provides highest levels of support for children, young people, and families, daily contact, review meetings, extended involvement from; school-based family liaison, school attendance lead and external agencies.

External agencies play a crucial role in supporting school attendance by helping us to offer specialised services and resources to address various attendance-related challenges. They provide additional support for both students and their families, helping to tackle underlying issues such as health problems, social or behavioural difficulties, and other barriers to attendance. As a school, we proactively engage with all external agencies and where necessary pay to ensure that our students have ongoing access to the support they need. We signpost families to relevant services, including educational welfare officers, counsellors, and other local authority teams. By working together, external agencies and schools can identify and address these issues effectively, promoting improved school attendance and well-being.

Once a student has a percentage of unauthorised absences above the government threshold within an academic year, they will be classified as persistently absent. The current 'Persistent Absence' threshold according to Government guidelines is 10% of the school year. Evidence shows that, in general, the higher

Lacon Childe School

Attendance Policy - Parents/Carers

the percentage of sessions missed across the Key Stage, the lower the level of attainment at the end Year 11. Specifically, students with no absences are 2.8 times more likely to succeed by achieving five or more good passes at GCSE, including mathematics and English (Department for Education).

In the context of school attendance and education in the UK, the terms 'Persistent Absence' (PA), 'Risk of Persistent Absence', and 'Severe Absence' (SA) are used to describe different levels of irregular attendance by children.

- 'Risk of Persistent Absence' is used to describe children whose attendance is consistently below 95% but has not yet reached the 90% threshold for persistent absence. As the school communicates to parents/carers in days, we identify 10-18 days absence as at risk of PA.
- 'Persistent Absence' is when a child has missed 10% or more of their school sessions, for most children during the academic year this will amount to 19 days absence.
- 'Severe Absence' is when a child has missed 50% or more of their school sessions.

Number of days missed	Tier Support Level	Category
0 - 4	1	Acceptable
5 - 10	2	Early intervention
11 - 19	3	Risk of Persistent Absence (PA)
>19	4	Persistent Absence At risk of Severe Absence

Unexplained attendance and prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parent/carers may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority. Further information can be found on the Shropshire Council Web site [School attendance, Shropshire Council](#) We are obliged to refer any issues to the Local Authority who will decide whether to issue a Penalty Notice. A school will refer a child to the Local Authority if:

- A child's attendance declines below 90% unless appropriate medical evidence is provided to excuse absence.
- A child's attendance declines rapidly and there is little evidence of parental/carer engagement.
- A child's attendance declines rapidly, and parents/carers refuse to accept their responsibility for ensuring that their child attends the school every day and on time.
- Parents/carers condone their child's absence or truancy.
- Parents/carers remove their child from school for unauthorised absence including family holidays.

After negotiation with the school, the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice to a parent/carer.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £120 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £60 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 £120 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.

The local authority's code of conduct states that 'the issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in cases of:'

- An excluded child is found in a public place during the school hours of the first five days of exclusion.
- Overt truancy is detected (including being caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally condoned absence is evidenced.
- Unauthorised leave of absence has been taken (unauthorised family holidays)
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)

Lacon Childe School

Attendance Policy - Parents/Carers

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers must ensure their children of compulsory school age receives appropriate full-time education according to their age, ability, and aptitude. This can be by regular attendance at school, at alternative provision, or otherwise. Non-attendance and refusal to work with the school may result in a fine of up to £2500, a community order, jail sentence and a Parenting Order. We hope as parents/carers you will work with us to best support your child, so this does not need to happen.

Elective Home Education and removal from a school roll

The 1996 Education Act states that, *'it is the duty of parents to secure an appropriate full-time education for their children of compulsory school age'*. Parents/carers can carry out this duty by ensuring their child attends school or parents/carers may decide to take on the duty to educate their child/children themselves and educate them at home – this is called Elective Home Education.

We respect the right of parents/carers to educate their child at home, however, are aware that sometimes this is a response to dissatisfaction with school or other difficulties. We encourage parents/carers to discuss their concerns with the appropriate school leaders in order to allow the opportunity to find solutions and provide support.

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll only under certain circumstances defined in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm.

Where children have moved out of area, they are only deleted from the school register when the school is satisfied that the child has been added to the register of a new provider. In cases where this cannot be established, our schools will follow the 'de-rolling checklist' provided by the Local Authority. If, having completed the checks, the child's whereabouts have not been determined, our school may remove the child from roll after 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence.

After a permanent exclusion, our schools must ensure that a student's name is removed from the school admissions register if 15 school days have passed since the parents/carers were notified of the governing board's decision to not reinstate the students and no application has been made for an independent review panel; or the parents/carers have stated in writing that they will not be applying for an independent review panel.

Where an application for an independent review panel has been made within 15 school days, the school must wait until the review has been determined, or abandoned, and until the governing board has completed any reconsideration that the panel has recommended or directed it to carry out, before removing a pupil's name from the register.

Lacon Childe School

Attendance Policy - Parents/Carers

Appendix 1: Definitions

The terms 'Persistent Absence', 'Risk of Persistent Absence', and 'Severe Absence' are used to describe different levels of irregular attendance by students. Here are their definitions:

Persistent Absence (PA):

Definition: Persistent Absence is a term used to describe a level of student absence from school that is a significant cause for concern.

Threshold: In England, a student is persistently absent when they have an attendance rate of 90% or below. This means they have missed 10% or more of their school sessions. For most children during the academic year this will amount to **19 days absence**.

Risk of Persistent Absence:

Definition: The term 'Risk of Persistent Absence' refers to a situation in which a student's attendance is at a level that suggests they are at risk of becoming persistently absent.

Threshold: While there is no specific threshold for 'Risk of Persistent Absence', it is typically used to describe students whose attendance is consistently below 95% but has not yet reached the 90% threshold for persistent absence. As the school communicates to parents/carers in days, we identify **18 days to 12 days** as at risk of PA.

Severe Absence (or Severe Persistent Absence):

Definition: The term 'Severe Absence' is used to describe the most serious cases of non-attendance.

Threshold: Focus will be given by all to students who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent students 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 partners and potential flexible adjustments to support them further.

Lacon Childe School

Attendance Policy - Parents/Carers

Appendix 2: Leave of absence

Headteachers can only authorise any absence when an application has been made in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child is normally resident and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance. An annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance. There are 190 school days in an academic year, leaving 175 days free for families to take holidays.

Full name of child(ren) - - -	Address:
Dates:	Number of School Days:
Reason for application and dates:	
<p>The headteacher may take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is highly unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life. It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event. The event cannot be organised outside of the school term. Taking part in the event will be of greater value to the child than attending school. 	
Parent's full name:	
Parent's full name:	
Signature of parent(s)/carer(s):	
Date:	
<p><i>Office use only</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised</p>	
Comments:	
Signed(headteacher):	
Date:	
<p>WARNING</p>	
<p>If this requested period of absence has not been authorised, details will be passed to Shropshire Council's Education Access Service. The Council may, in the following circumstances, issue a formal Warning, serve a Fixed Penalty Notice or take court action in respect of non-school attendance for this and any future unauthorised absence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents have not sought permission from the headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time The headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation 	

Lacon Childe School

Attendance Policy - Parents/Carers

Appendix 3: Individual Attendance Plan

Name of pupil	
Year group/class	
Staff supporting with attendance plan and roles	
Date plan was agreed	

Attendance history

Include details of attendance percentages (broken down by attendance code where appropriate), details of trends or patterns over time and any historical factors that might be relevant.

Current risk factors/current barriers to attendance

To help with this, it might be useful to carry out an individual attendance audit (see appendix).

Targets	Milestones	Date each milestone achieved
Target 1 -	For each target provide a number of measurable milestones •	
Target 2 -	•	
Target 3 -	•	