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Learning without limits

Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2024-2026

Responsibility: Principal

Reviewed: September 2024

Reviewed by: Principal Ian Peters

Next Review due: September 2026

Summary of Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2024-2026

This policy aims to promote good attendance and punctuality among learners to enhance their educational experiences and future opportunities. It is aligned with relevant legal frameworks, including the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2016.

Key Points:

Importance of Attendance: Good attendance fosters academic success, social skills, and personal development while reducing risks of anti-social behaviour.

Ethos: LVS Oxford maintains a proactive approach to attendance, valuing close partnerships with parents to address attendance issues.

Statement of Intent: The school commits to maximizing attendance and addressing barriers swiftly.

Legal Framework:

- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance.
- The school is required to keep accurate attendance registers, with specific codes for various attendance scenarios.

Rights and Responsibilities:

- *School:* Encourage attendance, communicate issues promptly, and support re-integration.
- *Learners:* Attend regularly and punctually and catch up on missed work.
- *Parents:* Ensure attendance, report absences promptly, and work with the school on attendance issues.

Attendance Procedures:

- Attendance is recorded electronically, with registers taken twice daily.
- Specific codes denote attendance status (e.g., present, illness, unauthorized absence).

Exceptional Leave:

- Leave can only be authorized by the school under exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness, family emergencies).
- Holidays during term time are generally not permitted, but the Principal may grant permission in exceptional circumstances.

Strategies for Improvement:

- Regular data analysis to identify and support pupils with attendance issues.
- Communication strategies to keep families informed about attendance matters.
- Reintegration plans for learners with extended absences.

Monitoring and Review:

- The policy will be reviewed biennially and updated according to local authority guidelines.
- It aligns with related policies, such as safeguarding and behaviour policies.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to develop good attendance and punctuality to give our learners the best chances in life. This policy is written regarding the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance. These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 – sections 434(1), 93), (4) & 6 and 458 (4) & (5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2016
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Key points:

- Good attendance and punctuality are vital for success at school and to establish positive life habits necessary for future success.
- Good attendance and punctuality minimise the risk of pupils conducting anti-social behaviour or becoming victims or perpetrators of crime or abuse (safeguarding)
- Regular attendance encourages children to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a whole team, sharing ideas and developing life skills. Children’s social skills are similarly enhanced by regular attendance along with personal development
- The school has a positive and pro-active ethos that places a high value on attendance and punctuality
- Partnership with parents/carers promotes good attendance and advocates close working with school

Statement of Intent

LVS Oxford is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its Learners. We believe that if learners are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a School, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all Learners. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and Learners the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a Learner’s attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and Learners to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We are aware of the significant challenges faced by our learners, namely:

- Many learners have previously experienced attendance issues, and some might well have been classified at Persistent Non-Attendees or School refuser.
- Attendance issues for ASC Learners can ‘balloon’ quickly due to anxiety issues and breakdown of routine.
- Many of our learners travel significant distances to attend school and this can place additional barriers on learners at times of heightened anxiety.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by their Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a Learner's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave. The amendments make clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The guidance in The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 will be followed regarding deleting Learners from the Admission Register.

Rights and Responsibilities

The School:

- LVS Oxford expects Learners to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn.
- LVS Oxford will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents and the Local Authority as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- LVS Oxford staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- LVS Oxford will work in partnership with parents and Learners to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- LVS Oxford will include in reports to parents on achievement, Learner's attendance at least annually.

The Learners:

- Learners will ensure that they attend school regularly, properly equipped and ready to learn.
- Learners will attend all lessons punctually.
- Learners can expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.
- Learners will be listened to and respected.
- Learners will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school.

The Parents:

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends school, properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call before 8.30 am on every morning of any absence.
- If a Learner is ill (up to maximum of 5 school days) then the school is able (after consultation with the parent) to record these absences as 'I' – illness. If, however the absence continues for longer than five school days the school reserves the right to record the absence as 'O' unauthorised, until such time as a Dr's note is received.
- If attendance problems do develop, the school expects parents to work actively with school staff and their local authority to solve them. This may include a re-integration plan to support the student back into full time school attendance.
- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record, and this will be included in all progress reports.

Registration

At LVS Oxford an electronic registration system is used to record, track and monitor all attendance.

Start and Close of Registration

- LVS Oxford will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon tutor session.
- Registration begins at 9.00am am and 1.15 pm each school day and registers will be closed 5 minutes after these times.
- If a Learner arrives after the register has closed, they will be marked as Late – after register closes.
- Session registers will be taken for all sessions within 5 minutes of the commencement of the session, and absence from the session will be noted.

The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be maintained accurately, recording Learners attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a Learner.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Staff Responsible for Processes

The Principal is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns. The Assistant Head will check the registers weekly and email staff and the Principal if staff fail to complete their registers by the designated time.

The Vice Principal and Deputy Headteacher will liaise regularly with the relevant authorities to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns and ensure that all relevant external professionals are kept informed. (i.e. Social Worker)

The SLT regularly monitors the school's registers and will make further enquiries if they notice any anomalies or cause for concern e.g. periods of unauthorised absence.

The tutor is responsible for taking the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session. The class teacher in charge of each session is responsible for register maintenance of their session register. Teaching staff taking the register are responsible for ensuring that codes used are appropriate (/, \, or 0 etc.)

LVS Oxford will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Each Learner should be seen by the staff member taking the register.

School governance

To discharge their agreed responsibilities, trustee/governors will:

- Meet to discuss whole school attendance termly
- Keep updated on all attendance related issues, and monitor termly school attendance
- Ensure that the children missing in education protocols are adhered to stringently

Procedures for Following up Absence/Lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on every morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made, then LVS Oxford will:

- Contact the parent by telephone as early as possible on the morning of absence (unless advised of transport issues), or if the parent is unobtainable;
- Write/email a letter requesting information – within 24 hours.

Where communication is maintained, the school will support the positive re-integration of the student back into full time school attendance. Where a student's absence is unclear, the school will contact the parent/carer to clarify why the student is not at school and when they are expected to return.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

THE DSCF CIRCULAR NUMBER 10/99 STATES THAT PARENTS MAY NOT AUTHORISE ABSENCE, ONLY SCHOOLS CAN DO THIS.

Exceptional Leave of Absence: This may include;

- An immediate family member is critically/terminally ill
- Families who have been through a traumatic event
- Families where a parent/carer can demonstrate clearly (e.g. a letter from an employer which can be verified) that they are restricted to all annual leave within school term time.
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive where the Learner relies upon funded transport.

Absence will be recorded as unauthorised in all instances not considered exceptional.

Holidays during term time are not acceptable and have shown to have seriously negative consequences upon a Learner's progress. However, the Principal retains the discretion to authorise such a holiday in exceptional circumstances.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

- Expectations are made clear to parents regarding attendance.
- Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and Learner reports will be used.
- Parents, Learners and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Learners with a known attendance problem being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement.
- Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Learners who are absent for an extended period will be supported back into school with a reintegration plan.
- All issues, which may cause a Learner to experience attendance difficulties, will be promptly investigated by the school.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Put in place re-integration practises if required to support child and parent
- Meet with the family, send letters and monitoring closely

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by Ian Peters, Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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.

Attendance codes

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
P	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as pupil is attending work experience
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance
X	Not required to be in school - for non-compulsory school age children
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances
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