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LVS Oxford

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

October 2020

Responsibility: Head of Centre

Reviewed: October 2020

Reviewed by: Deputy Head

Next Review due: September 2021

File location:

This policy can be found:

- On our website - <https://www.lvs-oxford.org.uk/about-us/key-information/policies/>
- By emailing - enquiries@lvs-oxford.org.uk

Purpose of Policy

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 with regard to the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance. These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

This policy also refers to advice contained within DFE-00132-2020, *School attendance* (August 2020), and the following Government guidance: *School attendance and absence* <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence> (accessed October 2020)

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- the following policies from LVS Oxford: Safeguarding, Children Missing Education and Culture and Well-being; and
- the Department for Education's statutory guidance for schools: *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE-00146-2020, September 2020).

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, work together as a whole team, share ideas and develop life skills. Children's social skills and personal development are enhanced by regular attendance.
- 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.

The LVS Oxford attendance policy and its implementation encourages some pupils to attend school more regularly through the implementation of specific measures for example:

- Registering pupils accurately and efficiently
- Contacting parents/carers, the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised
- Phone call or email to parents/carers if absence is more than 3 days
- Weekly reports to SMT on attendance

- Regularly reporting on attendance to parents/carers, the governors/trustees, Local authority and using Safeguarding procedures if appropriate
- Support from the Head of School, Deputy Head, Head of Sixth form and Behaviour Lead to ensure attendance is regularly evaluated to identify trends
- Efficient and robust systems to record those on a reduced timetable
- Therapy support at home and in school to support school refusers
- Online learning platform to ensure that pupils are accessing education if not in 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 as Persistent Non-Attenders or School refuser.
- Attendance issues for ASD Learners can 'balloon' quickly due to anxiety issues and breakdown of routine.
- Many of our learners travel significant distances to attend school – 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 with regard to 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, when reporting to parents on achievement, will include Learner's attendance figure at least annually.

The Learners:

Learners will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.

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 doctor'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.

Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record; this forms part of the Progress Reports.

Registration

Types of Registration and General Register Maintenance

At LVS Oxford an electronic registration system is used (iSAMS).

Start and Close of Registration

LVS Oxford will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon tutor session.

Registration begins at 9am 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.

Use of Codes

The codes used in registers are detailed in Appendix A.

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

The Deputy Heads and/or Head of Sixth form will liaise regularly with the relevant authorities to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns and ensure that all relevant external professionals are kept informed (e.g. Social Worker).

The Senior Management Team 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 is responsible for maintaining the register for each class session, ensuring that the appropriate code is used.

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 using iSAMS
- 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 within 45 minutes of the arrival time on the day of absence (unless advised of transport issues), or if the parent is unobtainable;
- Write/Email a letter requesting information – within 24 hours.

If the Learner is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the Learner to ease back into the school system. In the event of a Learner returning after a long-term absence then an individual transition plan will be implemented. This will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the Learner as possible.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence

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 is able to 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 when due to:

- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Haircuts
- ◆ Missed taxi
- ◆ Slept late
- ◆ No uniform
- ◆ Looking after brothers or sisters or unwell parents
- ◆ Minding the house
- ◆ Birthdays
- ◆ Holidays*

It may be necessary for the school to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- ◆ Appointment cards/letters
- ◆ Medical certificate
- ◆ Letter from GP

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

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

Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

In the belief that Learners are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs, the curriculum will be regularly reviewed.

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

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to 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 of time will be reintegrated back into school with an individual transition plan.

All issues, which may cause a Learner to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school.

This policy will be reviewed to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.

Head of School October 2020

Appendix A

Absence and Attendance Codes (taken from *School attendance*, DfE-00132-2020, August 2020)

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence.

The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of

any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational Establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'. See this addendum for further information, including advice on the application of code X.

Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

(This code is not counted as an absence in the school census)

This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care (and their equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland if a pupil attending a school in England resides there); or
- any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Schools should also continue to use code X to record when a pupil not of compulsory school age is not expected to attend as detailed below.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

Different Term Dates for Different Pupils

Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for ‘staggered starts’ or ‘induction days’. Code # can be used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school