



Lady Bay Primary School

Attendance and Absence Policy

Introduction

Lady Bay Primary School believes that in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning, regular and punctual attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

At Lady Bay Primary School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality. Late arrivals affect both the child concerned and others in the same class, disrupting teaching and interrupting learning.

If pupils are unable to attend school, for whatever reason, we expect parents/carers to inform the school before 9.00am. We prefer parents/carers to leave a short message on the dedicated pupil absence answerphone or Scholarpack App, but phone calls, emails to office@ladybay.notts.sch.uk or in person to the office staff are also acceptable. We are unable to accept verbal messages from siblings / other children. If a child does not arrive at school once the registers have closed, and if we have not received notification of the reason for their absence from the parent/carer – we will contact the parents/carers by text/ app, requesting an update so that we can be assured the child is safe.

1. Parents are expected to:-

- Ensure their child attends school every day the school is open, except where a statutory reason occurs
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (eg due to illness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, and do so in advance
- Book any medical appointments around the school day, where possible

2. Types of absence

Schools are required to record a child's attendance at school, and absences must also be recorded, either as **authorised** or **unauthorised** absences.

Authorised Absences - where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent, or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Absences may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical appointments (with evidence of appointment cards/letters)
- Days of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of these occasions will be determined by the Head Teacher on an individual basis)
- Exclusion

Unauthorised Absences – where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absences that are generally not authorised will be in the following circumstances:

- Family holidays (unless granted in exceptional circumstances)
- ⊖ Vehicle has broken down
- Arrival at school after the registers have closed

3. Persistent Absence

Absence of 10% or more is classified as persistent absence; this includes authorised and unauthorised absence.

4. Children missing from education (CME)

On day one of an absence, if no reason for the absence has been received by the office staff, they will text /message via Scholarpack app the parent/carer(s) requesting an update regarding their child's absence from school. Should no reason be received, and if the unexplained absence continues, on Day 2 a member of the office staff and on Day 3 a member of SLT will phone the parent/carer(s) – and if this is not felt to be sufficient a home visit will be made. From Days 0-10 of absence the school will continue to make efforts to engage the family, and will keep a record of all attempts to make contact and also record any responses received. If there is a history of Safeguarding concerns, or ongoing social care involvement, the MASH team will be informed of the absence.

Beyond Day 10, if the child's whereabouts have been confirmed and the child is still not attending education or engaging with school, a referral to Early Help through the Family Service (Pathway to Provision) should be made.

If the child's whereabouts are still unknown, a referral should be made to the Children Missing Officer (CMO)- this should be no later than Day 10 if no reason for the absence has been received.

5. Attendance Registers and late arrivals

All schools are required by law to take attendance registers twice daily – once at the start of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session. At Lady Bay Primary school starts at 8.55am, and we expect parents/carers to ensure that their children are on the school premises by 8.55am for the morning session and for the afternoon session, 12.45pm (FS), 12.55pm (year 1), 1pm (years 2, 5 & 6) and 1.20pm (years 3 & 4). The morning register closes at 9.15am. Children arriving between 9.00 – 9.15am will receive an **L** mark, indicating they were late for school. Pupils arriving after 9.25am will receive a **U** mark, showing they are present at school, but their late arrival was late enough to affect their learning. This will count as an unauthorised absence. All late arrivals should enter school via the front gate and report to the school office.

The school day ends at 3.25pm.

Attendance is monitored and where children are regularly arriving late to school the Head Teacher will speak to the parents/carers to establish the reasons for the late arrivals and emphasise the importance of punctuality and the impact lateness can have on learning.

In considering attendance levels, the class register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court, the regulatory requirements placed on the schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education Regulations 2006.

6. Absence Procedures

If a child is absent from school, parents/carers must follow the following procedures:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence (by 9.00am). The school has an answerphone (0115 9747001 option 1) and require a short message that gives the child's name, class and a brief description of the reason for the absence. A short message can also be sent via the Scholarpack App. Alternatively, if the reason for the absence needs more explanation, or a leave of

absence form is to be submitted, an email can be sent to office@ladybay.notts.sch.uk – by 9.00am on the first day of the absence. Parents/carers can also report absences in person, to the school office, also by 9.00am. Please do not ask siblings or other children to pass on messages regarding absences.

- If we have not received a reason for your child's absence by one of the methods outlined above, then once the class registers are closed at 9.25 am the office staff will physically check in the classroom that the child(ren) have not arrived late and then we will text / message via Scholarpack App the parents/carers of children with unexplained absences, informing them that their child has not turned up at school and requesting an update. We aim to do this by 9.30am.
- Parents/carers are requested to inform the school office in advance of any absences or late arrivals that will occur due to medical appointments. Confirmation of the appointment may be requested.

7. Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.

Any applications for leave of absence should be made in advance using the Leave of Absence form which is available from the school website or the letter rack outside the school office. The Headteacher will consider each request for leave of absence sympathetically but can only authorise absences where school accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Leave of absence will never be authorised during a statutory assessment period e.g. End of Key Stage SATs in May, during the first few weeks of the school year (a vital part of the school calendar for all pupils), or when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.

8. Absence for Religious Reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member. The absence will be marked in the register with an **R**. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would then be marked in the register with a **C**).

9. Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child attends school. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupils' attainment levels and disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Under the new national framework, all schools in Nottinghamshire will be required to consider issuing penalty notices when a child has 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons over a 10 week rolling period. A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution as it does not require an appearance in court (unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days). Full payment of the penalty notice means that parent/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

Where absence is persistent, entrenched or involves more than one child, the situation would normally be considered as suitable for enforcement through the Magistrates Court rather than by Penalty Notice fines.

10. People responsible for the implementation of this policy

It is the responsibility of the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to monitor attendance and punctuality. The Governing Body are expected to take an active role in attendance improvement, supporting the school to prioritise attendance and working with senior leaders to develop a whole-school attendance culture.

The Governing Body will be kept informed of attendance figures, including historic trends and patterns, and benchmarking against comparator schools, along with the steps the school is taking to improve attendance.

11. A graduated response to concerning absence at Lady Bay Primary School

	First Stage	Second Stage	Third Stage	Fourth Stage
Communication with families	Parents/carers will receive a phone call, text message or letter and be expected to make	Parents/carers will be sent a letter or phoned to arrange a meeting with	Parents/carers will be expected to engage in setting up an EHAF (Early Health	If the lateness/ attendance concerns continue, the family will be referred to Social

	significant improvement in the attendance of their child	the Headteacher or member of SLT. At the meeting attendance / late targets will be set and monitored	Assessment Form) to ensure the family are supported and attendance / lateness is not deemed to be regarded as a form of neglect.	Care – as a form of neglect. It will also trigger referral to the Local Authority Attendance and Welfare Officer.
School procedures	Once attendance falls below 90%, a letter will be sent to parents/carers alerting them of this. The monitoring process will begin.	If attendance rates fail to improve / decrease further, parents/carers will be invited in for a formal meeting with the Headteacher or member of SLT.	If under close monitoring attendance rates do not show signs of improvement, parents/carers will be asked to engage in the EHAF process, so they can be supported with any issues at home that are stopping their child from accessing school regularly and on time.	School will refer the family to Social Care because the family are not meeting the basic requirement of ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time. School will also alert the LA of the attendance / punctuality concerns.