

Attendance Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

Lealands High School policies are designed to support the school ethos, aims and vision. Lealands is a positive learning community which is fully inclusive to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

Our aims are outlined in our Home School Agreement. We want all members of the school community to:

- Enjoy learning
- Be enquiring
- Achieve the best
- Feel safe and secure
- Be happy
- Be well cared for and supported
- Be challenged and make good progress
- Be prepared for a bright future
- Make a valued contribution
- Enjoy a well ordered and stimulating learning environment

Our vision is to be:

“A centre of excellence, nurturing all learners, whatever their needs or interests, instilling high expectations for all and preparing young people for life and a bright future.”

All staff are required to uphold the ethos and aims of the school through the application of this and all school policies agreed by governors.

2. RATIONALE

- 2.1 Every child has a fundamental right to be educated. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school, as stated in The Education Act 1996.
- 2.2 Lealands High School considers regular and punctual attendance to be essential for effective learning, if students are to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Parents/carers and teachers have a duty to ensure maximum attendance at school.
- 2.3 The school is committed to working with parents and students to ensure that high levels of attendance are achieved.
- 2.4 Irregular attendance can:
 - Disrupt continuity of learning.
 - Undermine educational progress.
 - Lead to under-achievement and low attainment.
 - Harm prospects in later life.
 - Increase the risk of becoming victims of crime or anti-social behaviour.
- 2.5 Students will be absent from time to time for unavoidable reasons such as illness, but we have a responsibility to discourage them from being absent from school for trivial reasons and to teach them about the importance of good attendance.

3. BROAD GOALS

- 3.1 To ensure maximum student attendance through valuing high levels of attendance and punctuality, the staff at the school aim to encourage students to take full advantage of their educational opportunity by attending school regularly and on time.

- 3.2 To recognise external factors, which may influence a student's attendance and work in partnership with parents/carers, the student and the Education Welfare Service will address any difficulties. This will be particularly prevalent in those cases where a planned and phased reintegration is required, to support a student's return to school. Furthermore, this may include liaison with other agencies as and if appropriate.

4 PUPIL IMPACT AND OTHER OUTCOMES

- 4.1 Members of staff will identify patterns of irregular attendance at the earliest opportunity, and work to resolve any personal or social difficulties. They aim to provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring of attendance and punctuality, and take the appropriate action where necessary.
- 4.2 Lealands High School holds in high regard the links between regular attendance and student attainment, and strives towards raising the levels of achievement through promoting positive attitudes in students, regarding the importance of school attendance.
- 4.3 Raising awareness in parents of the importance in regular attendance, and emphasising their responsibility in informing the school of absence on the first day is a key objective of the school. However, it will be at the discretion of the school as to whether absence is coded as authorised or unauthorised.

5. APPLICATION

The staff at Lealands High School have a responsibility to:

- 5.1 Ensure that the registers are taken using the SIMS systems during lesson 1 at 8.45 am and during lesson 3 at 11.30 am pm as well as during all lessons in the day including tutorial time.
- 5.2 Record every absence in accordance with the correct categories identified and check with parents/carers if no contact or letter is received to explain the absence.
- 5.3 Identify emerging patterns of attendance, including punctuality, and investigate unauthorised absences.
- 5.4 Record arrival times and inform parents/carers of concerns regarding lateness.
- 5.5 Ensure that there are clear communication systems between members of staff in school to address attendance concerns, and to ensure that the information is shared with the designated members of the staff team.
- 5.6 Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Service to discuss attendance concerns. Pastoral Support Managers (PSMs) and Heads of Year (HOY) will meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer and use a baseline threshold of pupils with 90% attendance and below, as a structure to discuss attendance concerns. The PSM and HOY will work in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer to identify a plan of action with those pupils identified. Additional cases may also be raised where there are concerns.
- 5.7 Make contact with parents/carers to investigate attendance concerns by phone, in writing, arrange meetings in school or visits to the home in appropriate cases.
- 5.8 Parents and carers have a responsibility to:
- Ensure the child attends school every day.
 - Contact the school on the first day of any absence to inform them of their child's absence.
 - Avoid taking family holidays during school term time (see Student Leave of Absence Policy).
 - Ensure that their child arrives at school on time.
 - Liaise with the school to notify them if there are any presenting issues, which maybe impacting on their child's attendance.

- 5.9 The Education Welfare Service has a responsibility to:
- 5.9.1 Ensure that regular register checks are undertaken and to identify those students with emerging patterns of absence.
 - 5.9.2 Meet regularly with the designated members of staff at the school, namely the Attendance Officer, PSMs, HOY and other members of staff to discuss those students whose levels of attendance are causing a concern. A baseline threshold of students with 90% attendance and below will be used as a structure to address attendance concerns. The Education Welfare Officer will work in partnership with school staff to initiate a plan of action for those students identified. Additional students and cases open to the Education Welfare Service may also be raised.
 - 5.9.3 Work in partnership with the school to evaluate and analyse the attendance data at the school, regarding the students on roll and work in partnership with school staff to undertake pieces of focus work where the need and requirement is identified.
 - 5.9.4 Work in partnership with students, parents and school staff to address any presenting issues, which may be preventing a student from attending school regularly. This may include supporting and reviewing a student's phased return to school.
 - 5.9.5 Undertake case work to support the school parents/carers and students to promote education and regular attendance, and work towards achieving positive change where there are attendance concerns. This will include identifying individual targets, and working to specific time scales.
 - 5.9.5 Work within the legal framework and instigate legal proceedings in the magistrate court, for those cases where there has been little or no improvement in the attendance.
 - 5.9.6 Ensure that the legislation regarding penalty notices is used accurately and effectively when a pupil's unauthorised attendance meets the penalty notice warning letter criteria. This includes those students who have taken unauthorised leave during term time.

6. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

- 6.1 The school has several systems in place to identify and respond to student absence:
- 6.1.1 Teachers at the school will take the official school register at the beginning of lesson 1 at 8.45 am. The afternoon registration period is taken at the end the school break time ,during lesson 3 by the member of staff who is time-tabled to take the class for period 3. The attendance officer at the school processes the attendance data onto SIMS, in line with the register regulations.
 - 6.1.2 The Deputy Headteacher with the designated responsibility for attendance meets regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to review attendance at the school.
 - 6.1.3 The designated PSM for each year group will meet with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) every fortnight. Any student who is falling below 90% over the last 6 weeks will be discussed and a plan of action initiated. The student will then be monitored for a 12 week period.
 - 6.1.4 The school operates the truancy call system to follow up absence when the school have not been notified. It is a priority of the school to be pro-active in communicating attendance concerns to parents by phone, in writing, and in person during preventative meetings and parents' evenings.
 - 6.1.5 Students attending Campus Luton are monitored through the protocols established by the partnership schools.
 - 6.1.6 Students take responsibility to sign out when leaving and sign in on their return to school. Regular feedback is given by the host school on student attendance.

6.2 Rewards & Recognition

Lealands High School prides itself on using creative strategies and initiatives to promote the level of attendance, amongst the students on roll within the school community. These include the following:

- 6.2.1 Certificates are awarded to students in recognition of improved and good attendance.
- 6.2.2 Links are made between attendance and the reward system.
- 6.2.3 Individual form groups who have good attendance are awarded with certificates and prizes in accordance with the school rewards procedures.
- 6.2.4 Notice boards and plasma screens, which are located around the school, are used as a means of displaying levels of attendance for each year group.
- 6.2.5 At the end of each academic year a prize draw is made of those students who have achieved 100% attendance for a term. Additional raffle tickets are awarded to those who have achieved more than one term, to increase their chances in recognition of their achievement.

6.3 CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. All staff understand that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. Staff follow clear procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education.

Electronic registers are taken in every lesson during the day and absence is followed up promptly by our attendance officer. All staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

When a new student starts at Lealands they are placed on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on this day, the school will notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education. Our attendance officer, working closely with the Education Welfare Officer will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Where a parent notifies school that a pupil will live at another address, we record in the admission register:

- the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- the new address;
- the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, we record in the admission register the name of the new school and the date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

We notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register if the school and the local authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries.

If we notify the local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, we will provide the local authority with:

the full name of the pupil;
the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
the full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil is going to live and the date the pupil is expected to start living there;
the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there.

We consider whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as any safeguarding concerns.

7. LEGISLATION & LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICY

- 7.1 In cases where the school have tried to address attendance concerns without any improvement, the Education Welfare Officer will use the penalty warning system in the first instance.
- 7.2 If the local authority criteria of 8 unauthorised sessions of absence has been met during a twelve week period. A penalty notice (a fine of £60 per parent) will be issued if, following the three week grace period, the pupil has further unauthorised absences during the subsequent monitoring period. This is in accordance with The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.
- 7.3 The school is reluctant to give consent to term time leave requests because of the detrimental effect this has on a student's progress (please see Student Leave of Absence Policy).
- 7.4 In addition, penalty notices can be issued where a family deliberately takes leave during term-time (of five school days or more), without permission from the school, and it can be demonstrated that the parent/carer understood that permission had not been granted.
- 7.5 Alternatively, casework involvement from the Education Welfare Officer may occur following a penalty notice warning. In cases where there is little or no improvement in the student's attendance, the Education Welfare Service will instigate legal proceedings in accordance with The Education Act 1996.

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Headteacher and approved by the Governors.
- 8.2 **The Deputy Headteacher** has overall responsibility for the successful implementation of this policy.