



Shine like Stars



LOWDHAM C of E PRIMARY

## Attendance Policy

### ‘Shine like stars’ Philippians 2:15

**L**ove others – “My command is this: love each other as I have loved you.” John 15:12

**E**veryone join in – “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” Psalm 133:1

**A**lways do your best – “Work at everything you do with all your heart.” Colossians 3:23

**R**each out – “Do to others as you want them to do to you.” Luke 6:31

**N**ever give up – “I can do all this by the power of Christ. He gives me strength.” Philippians 4:13

Lowdham CofE (Aided) Primary School



## Attendance Policy

1.1 At Lowdham C of E Primary School we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its children and recognise this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually, children will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

1.2 All stakeholders– children, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this and outline how the school looks to sustain and improve school attendance

1.3 The school will ensure that all stakeholders know of the policy and have access to it.

## 2. School’s roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Lowdham C of E Primary have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our children are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day.

2.2 **Mr Jones** will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. He will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with, are made available to staff, children, parents and governors. He will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage through regular and ongoing monitoring and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### 2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown in Appendix 2).

ii) The register will be taken promptly at 8.55 am and 1pm by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at **9.15am and 1.30 pm**. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as an unauthorised absence. Children who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be dealt with under the school’s procedure in managing punctuality.

### 2.4 Categorising absence

- i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already



known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.

- ii) Lowdham C of E Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and pupil outcomes, and attendance and safeguarding children. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school and based on a professional judgement.

How absence is managed can be found on the school attendance pathway accompanying this policy (Appendix 1)

- iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.
- the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(b) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;

(c) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;

(d) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;

(e) in other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and for a very limited period. (at the Heads discretion according to circumstances)

### 2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.



## 2.6 Staff Training

The School will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## 3. Collection and analysis of data

3.1 **Mr Jones** and **Mrs Dunbar** will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to parents and the governing body. Attendance is monitored by whole school, year group and by class group. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, children with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.2 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DFE within the stipulated time frame.

## 4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

4.1 Parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil outcomes. Lowdham C of E Primary is committed to supporting parents and children in sustaining and improving attendance and the following measures are used to ensure policy and procedure can be applied fairly and consistently:

- Having in place an Attendance Policy that staff, children and parent/carers are familiar with.
- Promotion of the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to children and their parents/carers (newsletters/assemblies etc)
- Following the Pupil Registration Regulations, particularly for accurate, up to date and correct usage of coding
- Robust systems for monitoring attendance and data to analyse absence patterns
- Setting of trigger point/thresholds (pathway)
- Early intervention and a clear understanding of who does what and when (pathway)
- Clear and timely communication with parent/carers concerns and expectations about attendance by: Phone calls, letters, meetings in school or other venues and home visits.
- Identifying the causes for absence from children and parents point of view.
- Setting realistic targets and plans to support improved attendance.
- Supporting the most vulnerable children by: referral/signposting to other agencies, encouraging the return of children with catch up opportunities and reintegration plans
- Recording all actions in Attendance Case Files/chronologies.
- Sending formal letters to parent/carers.

### 4.2 Persistent Authorised Absence

Lowdham C of E Primary has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify, at an early stage, children who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

How **persistent absence** is managed can be found in the schools Protocol for Absence accompanying this policy (Appendix 1)



### 4.3 Persistent Unauthorised Absence

In the event that a pupil is persistently deemed to have unauthorised absence (where a parent gives no reason for a pupil being absent from school) application of the schools protocol for monitoring persistent unauthorised absence will begin. The schools threshold for unauthorised absence is defined as 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 6 week rolling period. How persistent unauthorised absence is managed can be found in the schools Protocol for Absence accompanying this policy (Appendix 1)

### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Children are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. The school's threshold for lateness is defined as 10 late occasions over a 6 week rolling period.

4.5 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Children arriving late should therefore report to the school office.

4.6 For the same reason it is important that children leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the school office.

## 5. Leave of Absence Requests

'.....headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.'

5.1 Lowdham C of E Primary School will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence requests other than in exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing, using the school's documentation with accompanying appropriate evidence, at least 4 weeks in advance of the intended absence dates.

5.2 Parents must understand that sending their children to school every day is a legal requirement and good attendance and punctuality prior to a leave of absence request is not a permission for a leave of absence request to be authorised

5.3 Every request is treated as unique and comparisons are not made

5.4 Consistency in approach is a priority

5.5 Lowdham C of E Primary School will NOT authorise a leave of absence request during periods of national tests, ie SATS.

5.6 The schools threshold for unauthorised absence is defined as 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 6 week rolling period.



How leave of requests are managed can be found in the schools Protocol for Absence accompanying this policy (Appendix 1)

## **6. Issuing of Penalty Notices**

6.1 To provide consistency, the Government has introduced a new national framework for unauthorised absence. The threshold for when a school should consider next steps is **10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks** (A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session).

This can be made up of any form of unauthorised absence including term-time holidays, late after close (attendance code U) of register and odd days of unauthorised absence (attendance code O) which add up to 5 days within a 10-week period.

Full details of all of the changes can be found by visiting the Government webpage: - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Education Penalty Notices are issued to parents of statutory school age children. They can be issued to each parent or carer who is deemed liable for the child's absence from school.

The costs and process is outlined below: -

**First Offence** - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

**Second Offence (within 3 years)** -The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

**Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)** - An offence for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance will not result in a penalty notice, but instead alternative action should be taken. This will often include prosecution by the Magistrates' Court. A magistrate can impose fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.

It is likely that a fixed term penalty notice will be issued when a child has had more than 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) or has been late 10 times in any rolling 10-week period (this period consists of school weeks and can run on both sides of a school holiday). The penalty is set at £160 and should be paid within 42 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £80. The penalty will be issued per child, per parent once within any rolling 10-week period. A parent is considered to be someone who has parental responsibility or an adult with whom the child lives on a regular basis. The notice is payable to the Local Authority.

For example, if a family with two adults and two children take both children out of school for 5 days, the fine would be £640 (£320 if paid within 28 days). For example, if a single parent



took two children for the same amount of time by him/herself, the other parent would not be charged. The fine for the single parent taking the children out of school would be £320 (£160 if paid within 28 days).

**If an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered child at a school, fails to attend regularly, his/her parent/carer (s) are guilty of an offence. Please also note that if you have more than one child, each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.**

**The Local Authority may take formal action against you for failure to comply with the law. Penalty notices are issued as an alternative to prosecution, but may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to the attendance issues.**

**Therefore your child's irregular attendance could result in one of the following actions:**

- 1. A Penalty Notice being issued. Each penalty notice is £80 if paid within the first 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22-28 days. Failure to pay will result in prosecution.**
- 2. Prosecution. This could lead to fines of up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.**

When determining whether a penalty notice should be issued the school will consider a range of factors including:

- Whether there is a noticeable pattern of non-attendance or lateness
- Whether there is a history of taking unauthorised holidays in term time
- Whether the parent is making every effort to ensure good attendance (this does not include simply calling school to say that their child is unwell)
- If the school believes that a parent/carer has given incorrect information, it is entitled to ask for evidence for that absence or lateness
- This may or may not prevent families taking holidays but calling school to say that their child is unwell. If school has good reason to believe a child is not unwell, a penalty notice may still be issued

6.2 Lowdham C of E Primary School is committed to ensuring every possible measure and level of support has been provided (detailed 4.1) before making a recommendation that a penalty notice be requested from the Local Authority.

6.3 In cases where a recommendation to issue a penalty notice is applied, this will always be supported with a robust evidence base to support the recommendation.

6.4 Parents must make themselves aware of the school thresholds for absence and punctuality these are attached to this policy in the 'Protocol for Absence'

## **7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**



7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Lowdham C of E Primary School.

7.2 Lowdham C of E Primary School expects parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- Notify Lowdham C of E Primary School on the first day of absence by telephone, email or letter.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, wearing correct uniform, and with the right equipment for the day-where uniform is absent, children will be provided with this.
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives

## **8. Children' responsibilities**

8.1 All children should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

8.2 Children should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Children also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

## **9. Governors' responsibilities**

9.1 The governing body of Lowdham C of E Primary School will ensure that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Governors will be updated regularly with details on attendance, absence and the number of Children being closely monitored. Mr Jones will also use national statistics to contextualise the school's attendance data.

## **10. Staff responsibilities**

10.1 Staff responsibilities are detailed in appendix 1 (Protocol for Absence & Lateness)



10.2 In addition to the above as part of transition to another class or school an attendance certificate will be printed for any pupil where attendance or lateness is a concern and passed on to the next teacher/school so that they can be proactive in ensuring improvement.



## **Appendix 1**

Operational (day to day)

In the event that a pupil is not present before 9:10am the following protocol should be adhered to...

- 9:15am (or as soon as children are in class) Office staff to complete phone calls home and attendance paperwork to clarify the absence.
- All absences to be recorded on SIMS and where required, a professional judgement comment made by the member of staff who makes the phone call.

### **Monitoring absence and identification of persistent authorised absence**

- Authorised absence monitoring will be ongoing by Mr Jones and Mrs Dunbar.
  - Any attendance falling below 96% is a cause for concern and will prompt action.
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- Where a child's absence falls between 90% and 93% the parents will be contacted by Mr Jones to make them aware of the absence rate and invited to a meeting to discuss concerns.
  - If there are further concerns or the percentage doesn't get any better, the parent is contacted for a second time for a meeting with Mr Jones. He will make the parent aware that this is due to persistent poor attendance (falling below 95%) and discuss with the parent how this is becoming a barrier to their child's learning and progress. This will include a request that the attendance must improve from the day of the meeting.
  - If a parent is contacted for a third time within a school year. This contact will outline the pattern of absence, and summarise the last two contacts, detailing the impact that the poor absence is having on their child's academic and personal development. This will include a reminder about providing evidence where appropriate to support pupil absence (eg doctors note). Parents will be warned that a further decline in attendance without supporting evidence will result in a sharing of attendance data with outside agencies and a prompt further investigation will be made.
  - In the event that there is still no improvement, then Mr Jones will pass the case file onto the Family Service Enforcement Lead and inform the parent in writing. Monitoring absence and identification of persistent unauthorised absence.
  - Ongoing monitoring identifies those children who have met the school's threshold for unauthorised absence which is defined as 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 6 week rolling period.
  - Mr Jones issues a warning letter of penalty notices for unauthorised absence.
  - The following day from the date on this letter is the first day of a 30 day monitoring period where unauthorised absence should not continue to reach a 5 day (10 sessions) threshold over a 6 week rolling period.
  - In the event that unauthorised absence continues to rise and meets the 5 day threshold then Mr Jones will request a penalty notice to be issued by the LA.
  - On the same day, a letter will be sent to the parent informing them that a request has been made to the local authority to issue a penalty notice as a result of persistent unauthorised absence.



## Appendix 2

### REGISTER CODES – REVIEWED AUGUST 2013

#### Absence and Attendance Codes

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

**Registration Code / \:** Present in school / = am \ = pm  
**Present in school during registration.**

**Code L:** Late arrival before the register has closed

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

**Code B:** Off-site educational activity. This code should be used when children 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 children educated off-site.

**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 children at more than one school e.g. hospital school, special school, referral unit, Gypsy, Roma or Traveller children.

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

**Code P:** Participating in a supervised sporting activity

**Code V:** Educational visit or trip

**Code W:** Work experience

**Code C:** Leave of absence authorised by the school

**Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.**

**Code E:** Excluded but no alternative provision made

**Code H:** Holiday authorised by the school Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances 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

**Code M:** Medical or dental appointments

**Code R:** Religious observance

**Code S:** Study leave



**Code T:** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

**Unauthorised Absence from School**

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

**Code N:** Reason for absence not yet provided

**Code O:** Absent from school without authorisation

**Code U:** Arrived in school after registration closed 9

**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

**Code Z:** Pupil not on admission register

**Code #:** Planned whole or partial school closure

**Good attendance**

**What are the benefits and what are the consequences of missing a few days over the school year?**

**Our expectation is that all children will attend school for at least 97% of the time**

Attendance		Missing days from school
100%	Zero days off	<b>Excellent!</b> A child can take advantage of all learning opportunities.
98%+	Less than a week	<b>Very good</b> –This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. A child should reach his/her full potential, leading to the best possible start to their formal education.
97%-98%	5 days - a school week	
96%-97%	6 days	<b>Good attendance</b> A child has a good start to their schooling and can make the most of all opportunities to do their best.
95.2%-96%	8 days	<b>Satisfactory Just above the average</b> - a child is likely to achieve their targets; however they should strive to build on this.
93%-95%	10 days – two school weeks	<b>Below the average attendance nationally.</b> If a child has more than two weeks away from school they may fail to make the progress expected.
92%-93%	15 days – three school weeks	<b>Poor attendance:</b> absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Parents will need to work with the school to improve the situation.
Below 90%		<b>20 days – four school weeks – unacceptable</b>
85%		<b>25 days – five school weeks – unacceptable</b>



82%	30 days – a half term	<b>Unacceptable</b> - A child will now be finding it extremely difficult to keep up and achieve their best. Below 85% attendance is considered persistent absenteeism and the Local Authority may become involved to take action.
78%	40 days	Children with this attendance are <b>missing a day for every week in school</b> . Absence is causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It is seriously affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child’s learning. The school will be supported by the Local Authority to take action against the parents/carers.

Reviewed and ratified by Governing body	Spring Term 2024		
Next Revision (Please highlight as appropriate)	Annual	<b>Biennial</b>	Tri-annual
To be reviewed	Spring Term 2026		