



LORDSWOOD
SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Date: September 2024

Review Due: September 2025

Reviewed Annually

Attendance Lead / Champion: Jayne Lusinski

Ratified by Chair of Governors: Sabrina Reilly

Date: 16th September 2024

Attendance Policy

Ethos and Aims

At Lordswood we believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils, to ensure they can benefit fully from the Proud Traditions, Wide Horizons and High Achievement that Griffin Schools offer. We aim to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any barriers to this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. The attendance expectation is 96%, however the school aims for 100% attendance for pupils and promotes good punctuality now and for the future.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance on "Working together to improve school attendance" (applies from 19 August 2024).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Parent and carers should be aware that if they fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually they may be prosecuted under section 444 Education Act 1996 by the Local Authority.

Regular and punctual attendance provides the means for children to take advantage of all educational opportunities. It ensures continuity, promotes responsibility and a purpose which can be carried into adult life. A pupil who is late or absent, misses the introduction to a lesson or a new concept, causes disruption to others and is likely to have missed the instructions to the lesson, thus putting themselves at a disadvantage.

Roles and Responsibilities – Parents / Carers and Pupils

Parents/carers of children of compulsory school age are legally required to ensure that they receive fulltime education. Parents/carers are also responsible for informing the school of any absence as soon as possible; the school expects to be contacted on each day of the absence. This can be done by telephoning the school on 01634 336767, by personal contact, emailing the office (office@lordswood-gst.org) or by written note. The reason for absence and when the child is expected to return to school should be stated.

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, then please contact us as soon as possible so that barriers to attendance can be understood, and appropriate support can be put in place to support you, your family, and your child to prevent further absences.

Pupils are expected to arrive at school punctually:

All children in Years R-6 are expected to be in school 8.45am to 3.15pm.

Nursery children are expected between 8.30am and 11.30am / 12.15pm and 3.15pm

Morning Registration is taken in class between:

Nursery - 8.30am – 8.40am

Year R - 8.45am – 8.55am

KS1 - 8.45am – 8.55am

KS2 - 8.45 am – 8.55am

Afternoon Registration:

Nursery - 12.15pm – 12.20pm

Year R - 12.45pm – 12.50pm

Year 1 - 12.50pm – 12.55pm

Year 2 - 1.00pm – 1.05pm

KS2 - 1.20pm – 1.25pm

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Lordswood Lane and Courtfield gates will open at 8.35am and 3.05pm.

Registration closes at 8.55am. A child arriving between 8.55am and 9.25am will be recorded Late (L Code).

Should a child arrive after 9.25am they will be given an unauthorised absence mark (U Code).

Parents are expected to notify the school of changes to contact details and if there is a change in home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

Persistent lateness can be seen as an unauthorised absence and is managed in the same way as poor attendance by the school. School starts 8.45am for all pupils in Years R-6. Pupils should arrive at school 5 minutes before so they can enter the school calmly with their class. If families decide to send their child to a different school they must inform Lordswood School as soon as possible in writing.

Breakfast Club

Lordswood runs an established Breakfast Club for Years R to 6. The aim of the club is to promote punctuality and good attendance. Breakfast Club may be a useful option for families where there are barriers to punctual attendance. Breakfast Club is run by trained school staff and is open from 7.30 am.

Roles and Responsibilities – The School will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment;
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition;
- Inform parents/carers of the % attendance of their child/children at parents evening and in their annual report;
- Contact parents/carers on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns;
- Work in partnership with families and assist parents to access additional services;
- Liaise with outside agencies when necessary to support families and offer pastoral support in school;
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss reasons for absence and to offer support to improve attendance;
- Request medical evidence when attendance is a cause for concern.
- Agree an attendance contract if appropriate;
- Issue a Notice to Improve if attendance continues to decline;
- Refer to the local authority attendance officer following 10 unauthorised absences in a 10 week period following no improvement which may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.
- Meet regularly with the local authority attendance officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality;
- Refer to the Local Authority after 5 or more days holiday within a 10 week period who will issue a Holiday Penalty Notice (HPN)

The attendance lead is Jayne Lusinski.

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Recording attendance

Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See *Appendix 1* for the DfE attendance codes applicable at Lordswood.

We will also record:

- [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Leave of Absence

Only the Head can approve absence. The school does not have to accept the parent/carers offered explanation as a valid cause for absence. There are certain circumstances outlined in the DfE guidelines that the school categorises as authorised absence. The guidelines are based on the needs of the community and the kinds of reasons parent/carers may wish their children to take leave of absence. The school follows the guidelines for authorising absence as listed below:

- Illness, emergency medical, dental and hospital appointments. It is expected that routine check-ups, including hospital review appointments should, as far as possible, be made during holiday periods or after school hours.
- Family bereavements
- Attending a religious observance
- Off-site activities (These fall into two categories; educational visits or individual activities e.g. an examination)
- Suspensions (Suspended pupils are treated as authorised absence. They will remain on the school's register unless permanently excluded when the situation has to be reviewed)

Medical Evidence

In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend school will be evident and can be accepted without question or concern. Only where the school has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness will medical evidence be requested to support the absence and when attendance is a cause for concern, evidence will also be requested to authorise absence/s.

Holiday Requests

Lordswood does not authorise a leave of absence for extended periods during term times for extended holidays or visiting family abroad. A leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances and is considered on an individual basis.

If parents are requesting a leave of absence they need to:

- Complete a leave of absence form and submit to the school office at least 2 weeks prior to requested date.
- A letter will be sent from the office with a response.
- If the leave of absence is a holiday, a further letter is sent from the office informing that a penalty notice referral will be made to the Local Authority.
- The Local Authority will issue a holiday penalty notice.

Penalty notices

The Head (or someone authorised by them), Local Authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the Local Authority before doing so, and send a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21 days).

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

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First offence -

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Second Offence (within 3 years) -

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)-

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child. Please see *Appendix 2* for Flow Diagram

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the Local Authority area in which the pupil attends school. They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe will be given for the improvement period.
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

A Notice to Improve will not be issued if the absence is due to holiday.

Late Collection of Children

Persistent late collections are monitored and the school attempts to support parents/carers with this by helping to develop strategies to improve their punctuality in collecting their children.

School Procedure

The school monitors attendance and lateness weekly. Issues relating to pupil attendance are followed up during regular review periods. Attendance is a high priority and is celebrated weekly in assembly with the presentation of a trophy. 100% attendance certificates are issued termly and at the end of the year. The class with the highest attendance chooses a reward at the end of the year.

The Department for Education expects a child to have an annual school attendance of not less than 96%. By working together, we aim that every child achieves that goal.

Head:

Jayne Lusinski

Pastoral Manager:

Lorraine Horgan & Kayleigh Butcher

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Following codes have been taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C1	Participating in a regulated performance	Pupil granted a licence to participate in a performance during school hours
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

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Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 1: Flow Diagram

