

# Laleham Gap School – LGS24Attendance Policy (Pupils)

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**Kent County Council**

**Education Learning and Skills Directorate**



**Attendance Policy (Pupils)**

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Date: May 2016

Next Review: May 2018

Owner: Attendance Coordinator

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# Contents

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1.0	Security Protective Marking	Page 2
1.1	Not Protectively Marked	
2.0	2.1 Previous Policy Rescinded	Page 2
	2.2 New Elements Incorporated	Page 2
	2.3 Version incorporates instruction for both school sites	Page 2
3.0	3.1 Introduction	Page 3
	3.2 Links with School Improvement	Page 3
	3.3 Strategies for Maximising Attendance	Page 4
4.0	Legal Framework – Parent/Carer Responsibility	Page 4
5.0	Term time Absence, Holiday Requests	Page 5
6.0	Procedures: Reporting Absence	Page 5
7.0	Procedures: Lateness	Page 6
8.0	Children Missing Education [CEM]	Page 6
9.0	Policy Review Protocol	Page 6

## **1. SECURITY – PROTECTIVE MARKING**

1.0 Not Protectively Marked.

## **2. CHANGES TO POLICY**

- 2.1 The following changes have been made to this policy wef. May 2016
- The previous policy has been rescinded
  - The policy has been updated to incorporate new criteria/elements

2.2 This policy is scheduled for review in May 2018

### **3. 1. INTRODUCTION**

At Laleham Gap it is recognised that we cannot make a difference to the lives of the pupils we work with unless they attend school regularly. We expect and aim towards 100% attendance for all our pupils. We recognise that there are times when pupils are not well enough to attend school and have authorised absences during times of illness. We value effective communication with parents to ensure that authorised absences are correctly reported and monitored. We recognise that this communication is important as non-attendance can also indicate, particularly with our client group, unresolved anxieties or issues. We want to support parents and families by ensuring that strategies are put in place to help with any attendance issues.

We understand that it may not be possible for all pupils to attend full time when they first arrive at the school and that for some, a phased introduction might be a more appropriate method by which they are inducted successfully into full-time attendance.

We recognise that sometimes our pupils will be late to school due to no fault of their own; traffic issues on the road or with individual taxi companies, resulting in a late arrival. However if pupil's are in control of their arrival time and are arriving late, then this will be addressed by staff and strategies put in place to ensure punctuality is encouraged at all times.

### **3.2. LINKS WITH SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

Laleham Gap recognises the strong link between attainment and attendance and the important role parents play in ensuring that it is as high as possible.

A pupil's progress can be significantly affected if attendance is below 95%.

If a pupil attends school, on average, for only 90% of the time, they would be missing one full day of learning in every two weeks.

An average of 90% attendance over 5 years is half a school year missed and 80% attendance over 5 years is the same as missing a whole school year.

**Lateness:**

At Laleham Gap, punctuality is modelled and expected. We encourage all pupils to adhere to the timings of the school day and timetable. We support pupils in developing their own understanding of the passage of time and appreciate that being precise in time management can often be quite an important issue for many of our students. We are also aware that the majority of our pupils are transported to and from school, taking away the ability to be in control of their punctuality. We recognise that this in itself can be quite stressful for some of

our pupils. We report and follow up on any transport issues brought to the school's attention.

If a pupil's punctuality becomes a cause for concern, for other reasons unrelated to transport, an attendance and punctuality plan will be initiated. This is implemented by the Resource Manager, in conjunction with the class teacher or Pastoral Team. A programme is devised and shared with parents who are invited to be involved in the planning and delivery. This is to ensure that strategies are put in place to ensure punctuality is encouraged at all times.

Whole school attendance targets are set annually in consultation with the Department for Education, the Local Authority and the school's Educational Welfare Officer, and reflect national expectations.

### **3.3 STRATEGIES FOR MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE**

The Governing Body, Head teacher and Attendance Co-ordinator, in liaison with the Deputy Headteacher, analyse the absence data to identify any areas of concern, particularly where there are high levels of absence linked to a specific reason.

Good attendance is consistently promoted in assemblies, lessons and in form tutor times.

Parents are kept informed of pupil attendance and advised if concerns arise.

Parents/carers are contacted on the first day of any absence.

The attendance co-ordinator and pastoral team will track attendance on a weekly basis, and highlight concerns and contact parents where appropriate.

Should the attendance of these pupils not improve the parents will be invited to a meeting with the attendance co-ordinator and the pastoral team to identify concerns and initiate a programme of intervention with agreed targets and strategies to support the pupil.

The school will support pupils who are finding attending school difficult and individual strategies will be developed with parents and carers to improve attendance.

Where possible staff will make use of internal sanctions before resorting to fixed term exclusions. Please refer to the school Behaviour Policy for a list of internal sanctions.

## **4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK - PARENT/CARERS RESPONSIBILITY**

The Education Act 1996 states: "If any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, the parents of the child shall be guilty of an offence." You are also required to explain all absences which, in the case of illness, may have to be supported by medical evidence. If you fail to do this, the Local Authority must consider prosecution under the following:

**Section 444 (1) or 444 (1A) Education Act 1996**

(i) Summoning you to appear before the Magistrates' Court where you can be fined a sum not exceeding £1,000

**Section 444 (1A) Education Act 1996**

(ii) Summoning you to appear before the Magistrates' Court where you may be fined a sum not exceeding £2,500 for each offence and/or be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months and/or made subject of an alternative sentence as deemed appropriate by the Court.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk, encouraging antisocial behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know children are safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.55 am.

## **5. HOLIDAY REQUESTS/TERM TIME ABSENCE**

The Governing Body is concerned that authorised leave of absence for holidays not viewed as an entitlement. The Head teacher can allow up to 10 days' absence in exceptional circumstances such as: for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time; if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Parents/carers wishing to take their child/children out of school during term-time are asked to make application to the Head Teacher on a form obtained from the school office, at least six weeks in advance.

The application will be considered on an individual basis taking into account:

- the pupils' current absence record
- the number of previous similar requests
- the year group the pupil is in and the proximity to major tests/examinations.

## **6. REPORTING ABSENCE**

It is essential that school is informed, by telephone on the first day a child is absent and every day thereafter. The parent/carer is responsible for making contact with school before 9.30am, there is also a 24 hour absence line available to notify if necessary.

## **7. PROCEDURES FOR LATENESS**

The school discourages lateness as it disrupts both the education of the pupil concerned and of others. All children who arrive late should report to the office where they will be registered.

All pupils should arrive at school after 8.30am but before 8.50am in the case of the Secondary phase, and 9.00am in the case of the Primary.

Registers close at 9.30am, any lateness after registers close could be marked as unauthorised absence.

Permission for absence will only be granted in ***exceptional circumstances***.

The Headteacher will consider each absence request individually and decide whether to grant the absence.

The Headteacher will also decide how many days the pupil can be away from school if the absence is granted.

## **7. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION [CEM]**

### **KCSiE Annex A: Further information on a child 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. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. Effective information sharing between parents, schools, colleges and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children are safe and receiving suitable education. 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. School and college staff should follow their procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. Schools and colleges should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that 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. Further information about children at risk of missing education can be found in the Children Missing Education guidance

## **8. REVIEW PROCEDURES**

The Attendance Co-ordinator will review this policy on an annual basis. If significant amendments are required, the policy will need to be reviewed by the Governing Body for their approval.