

Pupil Attendance Policy (SEND)

Date: September 2021

Review date: September 2022

Lime Trust

Lime Trust is founded upon four principles: Leadership, Innovation, Motivation and Excellence. It creates a sustainable group of exceptional, high-performing schools that improve life chances, and are trusted and respected in their communities. Lime Trust provides a high quality education for pupils through school-to-school collaboration, Trust direction, high challenge and support.

Along with our principles, Lime Trust has core values that are demonstrated and upheld by our pupils, employees and stakeholders. Respect for all underlines our seven core values:

Respect
Equality
Self-worth
Partnership
Enjoyment
Communication (a voice for all)
Trust

Introduction

Lime Trust supports the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We put the best interests of the child at the centre of all we do and actively promote the key rights, respecting values of non-discrimination, participation, safety and personal development. We believe that every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them and to have their views taken seriously.

We seek to ensure that all our pupils receive a full time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to achieve their full potential. The school strives to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each pupil feels cared for, secure and respected. We expect all our pupils to attend school on time every day, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Roles and Responsibilities for Good Attendance

Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Our schools give high priority to working with pupils and parents to ensure we are doing our best to support the needs of our pupils. We recognise that good communication and strong home-school links are effective ways of solving any attendance issues and barriers that may impact on pupils' achievement. We have high expectations that where possible pupils should have a minimum of 96% attendance, although we are aware some of our pupils have complex medical needs that may result in prolonged or frequent periods of absence. We encourage parents to send their children to school when they are fit to attend, and we offer support at home if a pupil is absent for extended periods due to their medical needs.

Family Support Worker

Each school has a Family Support Worker who works closely with parents/ carers to provide information and advice about issues such as:

- Personal independent payment/DLA forms

- Information about benefits
- Referrals to short breaks
- Referrals to Child and Family Consultation Services (CAMHS).
- Referrals to specialist children's health services
- School attendance
- Free school meals
- Transitions and next steps in education
- General family support
- Liaise with external services.
- Educational Health and Care Plans
- Specialist workshops for parents

Educational Welfare Officer

Where there is an Educational Welfare Officer (EWOL), they support parents/carers and pupils to achieve good attendance and help them to break down any barriers to their attendance. This is an essential part of working with children and young people to become successful learners and to give them the best possible start in life.

The EWOL roles are:

- To contribute to raising achievement by improving school attendance
- To assist the school in meeting their obligations and targets in relation to school attendance, especially persistent absence
- To make unsupervised contact with parents/carers to assess the reasons impacting on attendance of individual students and facilitating their return to education
- To initiate appropriate legal action to ensure the school is carrying out its statutory responsibility. This will involve preparing statements, attending and presenting evidence

The EWOL also works closely with the Education Welfare Officer for the LA to monitor absence and punctuality and to support families overcome any barriers. We take unauthorised absence and persistent lateness seriously and while we will work to resolve the issue if the problem persists formal letters will be sent out and if appropriate fines may be issued.

Pupils and families will not be sanctioned for any lateness caused by Local Authority (LA) Transport. Parents hold the responsibility for pupils that arrive late to school who do not use the LA transport.

Registers

Class registers are legal documents.

DfE guidance states registers must be taken twice a day, first thing in the morning and straight after lunch. Registers must be taken by the Class Teacher or the member of staff leading the class and must be done in the presence of the pupils. Each school has a 25 minute registration period each morning. The times vary slightly in each school.

On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Attending an approved educational activity;
- Absent; or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

*(Our Teachers record present or absent with office staff recording the reason)

The school will follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

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

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

We have a robust and effective First Day Calling procedure in place to ensure that any unplanned student absences are identified promptly, with welfare calls (and visits where necessary) made immediately after the schools register has closed.

Arbor is used to generate a report identifying all uncoded/unplanned absences. Initial checks are made with the relevant class teacher to establish whether they are aware of the reason for the absence, or whether a message has been conveyed via the home/school book which has not been passed to the school admin team.

If the reason for the child's absence is still unknown the EWOL will call parents to ascertain why the child is unable to attend school and the register will be coded accordingly. In the event that it is not possible to make contact with parents, calls will subsequently be made to other contacts recorded on the school's system, in order of priority. This process all happens as soon as registers have closed.

If after calling all the numbers contact still cannot be made, a home visit will be carried out by the school Family Support Worker/member of the safeguarding team to ensure that the child and their family are safe and well. If this is unsuccessful support from children's services/MASH/Police will be sought to establish the whereabouts and safety of the child.

Any unplanned and unexpected absence for a child subject to a Child Protection Plan will be advised to the allocated social worker immediately.

Governance

The Board of Trustees have a responsibility for attendance at the school. This is delegated on a daily basis through the Headteacher to Class Teachers, Family Support Worker and Admin Team. Governors regularly monitor the effectiveness of the attendance management strategies and attendance policy. The Family Support Worker provides regular updates in regards to both attendance and punctuality to the Headteacher and Governors.

Rewarding Good Attendance

We are aware absence is unavoidable for some of our pupils. When considering the use of rewards, we therefore make sure we do not discriminate against people who are absent due to medical or other unavoidable reasons.

Different schools operate different systems to reward attendance appropriate to the needs and understanding of their cohort

Absence Procedures for Parents and Carers

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence and keep us informed thereafter via the absence line or directly at the school office
- If your child is due to have a planned medical appointment or procedure/operation, you must notify the school in advance and provide documentary evidence in the form of an official letter or appointment card, where available make appointments outside of school hours.
- The school may still carry out a home visit even if parents call in to report the absence.
- If pupils go abroad and they or a parent/carer gets Covid-19, which then prevents them from travelling back to the UK, a proof of the positive test will be required.

If Parents fail to contact the school or provide a reason for absence the EWOL will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our EWOL if the absences persist
- Ask you to provide medical evidence, for example a doctor's letter or prescription for medication, if attendance is persistently below the expected level

If following all of the above attendance remains a cause for concern formal attendance management procedures may be initiated.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using

Code E: Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case 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 (not medical or dental appointments) Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Covid related absence codes as follows:

Code X01: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school. Sessions non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code X02: Self-isolating COVID-19 symptoms. Students self-isolating because they have symptoms of coronavirus but they have not yet had a positive test.

Code X05: Quarantine requirement. Student required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK.

Code X06: Shielding. Students who have been identified as clinically vulnerable and advised that they should not attend school.

Code X07: Government attendance restrictions. To be used for national restrictions to education settings in line with Government advice.

Code X08: Advised by Public Health Directors not to attend school. To be used for local restrictions to education settings in line with advice from Directors of Public Health.

Code X09: NHS test and trace required self-isolation. Student required to self-isolate due to contact with a confirmed case, by NHS test and trace.

Code X: Non-statutory school age absence or Covid-related absence. Where possible, use one of the other codes to enable reporting on your Covid-19 Dashboard. This code can be used for Covid-related absences not covered by the codes above.

Code I01: Illness. Students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness.

Code I02: Illness - Confirmed case of COVID-19. This is for pupils who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.

Code I: Illness. Where possible, use one of the other codes to enable reporting on your Covid-19 Dashboard. This code can be used for illness not covered by the codes above.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided. Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation. If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed. Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

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. This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register. This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure. This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

An unauthorised absence is where the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable or

Term Dates

Confirmation of our school term dates are available from our websites or the main school office. Please be aware that these may differ from the boroughs term dates

Please follow the link to your academy from our Lime Trust website:

www.limetrust.org

Sanctions for an Unauthorised Absence without permission

If individual pupil's unauthorised absence rises above 12 sessions in any term, a parent can receive a Penalty Notice or prosecution under the Education Act 1996 Section 444.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social behaviour Act 2003, Local Authorities are required to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parent/carer of a child who has irregular attendance, where the absence is unauthorised by the school. A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for unauthorised leave of absence by the Local Authority following discussions with the Family Support Worker. Your local council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if you do not pay within 21 days. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

The criteria that the school will apply to determine 'exceptional' is a circumstance that has unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, each individual request will be considered on its merits.

In line with Pupil Regulations the Headteacher's decision is final.

No authorisation for leave of absence can be given retrospectively, which means that permission must always be sought beforehand.

In the event that there is an absence after a school holiday, the school will need to see proof, in the terms of a medical certificate or flight delay. The school will decide if the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

In the event that leave for exceptional absence is granted, any further days of absence will be regarded as unauthorised.

If the pupil is subject to child protection plan, social services will be immediately notified. Leave will not be authorised at times when children are scheduled to take public examinations. Parents/carers will be notified as soon as these dates are known.

Court Proceedings

If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 days, the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence. This prosecution is for the offence of failing to secure attendance at school. Prosecutions are brought under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Local Authority can also use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the pupil. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Special Leave Requests in Term Time

We understand and encourage participation in external school activities and pursuits. This can sometimes lead to pupils requiring special leave from school to attend additional training, competitions and other events.

Any child requesting special leave must supply a letter in writing to the Head Teacher, accompanied by an official invite on headed paper from the organisers / providers. This request is discretionary and applications will be considered on a case by case basis. Any absence due to sickness prior to or after the requested date will be marked as an unauthorised absence, unless medical evidence is provided.

Child Performance License – if your child is modelling / performing for film / TV / publications etc. legislation sets out that in addition to the above guidance the parents must obtain a Local Authority License. The Local Authority Child Performance Policy details all the by laws relating to this area.

Safeguarding

A pupil may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each pupil is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis may be considered as a safeguarding matter. All concerns are logged on the school's online portal.

Informing the school of a change of address or contact details

If you are moving to a new address, we require parents/carers to provide the school with their new address and contact numbers/details.

If you are moving to a new borough but plan to still send your child to their current school you must notify the local authority and inform them of the new borough you will be moving too.

Parents/carers must notify the school immediately if they are moving abroad and provide the new home address and new school address. The parents/carers must provide flight details. Failure to provide this information to the school will result in a Child Missing Education referral being made to the local authority and the school may also communicate with 'Home Office' and other child safeguarding agencies if necessary.

Moving to a new school

Parents/carers must notify the school immediately if they are removing their child to start at another school and provide us with the name of the new school. Parents/ carers are also responsible for notifying the local authority that they will be moving out of borough. If a family are moving to a new address, which requires the child to attend a new school but the child is not yet registered then parents/carers must provide school and the local authority with their new address. If a child moves away and we have not been notified we will make every reasonable effort to locate the child and their family. If we are unable to make communication with the family, the child is kept on roll until we receive confirmation from the new school and a Children Missing Education referral will be made to the local authority and the Special Educational Needs Team will be informed.