



Liden Academy
Attendance Policy and Procedure

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Approved by:	Liden Academy Committee
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Principal: **Jeff Mason**
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Introduction

Liden Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all children and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all.

Why regular attendance is important?

For children to gain full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, it is vital that they attend school regularly as the facts show below,

'Pupils who missed between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to go on to achieve five good GCSEs. This compares with 73% of pupils with over 95% attendance.'

Department for Education statistics

Further we also recognise the clear links between attendance and safeguarding children. The school will follow safeguarding procedures to ensure children are safe and closely work with vulnerable families.

At Liden Academy we expect all pupils to have at least 95% attendance.

Roles and responsibilities

Staff:

All staff (teaching and support) at Liden Academy 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 and look forward to coming to school every day. All staff also have a responsibility to respond to training, set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Academy Committee:

The Academy Committee (governors) of Liden Academy shall make arrangements for ensuring 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 children at the school.

Principal:

The Principal (as Attendance Leader), will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

Attendance Officer:

The Attendance Officer will ensure that the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This involves providing regular data reports and working closely with staff and parents to promote good attendance.

Inclusion Team:

Mrs Robison, our Pastoral Lead, and Miss Lawrence, our SENCO, are available each day to support families with attendance challenges. We can provide support with transport to school or working through more difficult challenges through a TAC (Team Around The Child) Plan. Please contact directly on 07597 491605 or email senco@liden.excalibur.org.uk.

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer **Nicky Dunn** or the Inclusion Team in order to provide them with more personalised support on attendance.

Parents/Carers

Parents are legally responsible to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis; children reach statutory school age the term after their fifth birthday.

Children are required to attend school for 190/365 days per year.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law. This may result in prosecution.

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before **8.50am**. Further absence needs to be reported on a daily basis to the Attendance Officer **Nicky Dunn**.

Phone	01793 531025
Email	attendance@liden.excalibur.org.uk

- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspect of their child's school life that is affecting their attendance. We will endeavour to support parents to address any concerns.

School Opening times

The school gates (Barrington Close) are open from **8.30am**.

Primary age children must be in class by no later than **8.50am** when doors to the school and classrooms will be locked.

The gates to the school will be closed at **8.50am**.

Nursery age children need to arrive by **9.00am** for the morning session and **12.30** for the afternoon session.

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the school day and once at the start of the afternoon session.

Primary School	Register opens	Register closes
Am	8.55	9.00
Pm	1.00	1.05

Nursery	Register opens	Register closes
Am	9.05	9.15
Pm	12.35	12.45

Teaching staff are responsible for completing the attendance registers; administrative staff add prescribed codes for absence.

Lateness and punctuality

Children are expected to arrive at school, and be in their classroom for registration, on time every day. Arriving late into class is for some children unsettling and also disruptive to the learning of other children.

Children arriving late after **8.50am** will need to report to the school office.

After registration any pupil arriving after **9am** is considered as late (**L**). Arrivals after **9.15** are recorded as an unauthorised absence (**U**) for the whole morning session.

The school will contact parents and carers when their child is persistently late. Initially this will be by letter or a meeting. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Unplanned Absence

- The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by **8.50 am** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. A voicemail can be left at any time on the dedicated absence line.
- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or if the pupil's attendance is already a concern, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence. Medical evidence could include a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or text, screenshot of calls to the GP/111. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- In cases where there are attendance concerns and the family struggle to access a GP, the Attendance Officer may seek support from the Local Authority's Safeguarding Nurse.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call/text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts the school may carry out a home visit,
- The school will call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer.
- If a child misses ten consecutive days of school, and there has been no contact at all from the parent/carer despite the best efforts of the school to make contact, the school will submit a Child Missing in Education form to the Local Authority.
- The Local Authority contact the school daily for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils with a social worker, and the Attendance Officer will share this information.

Approval for term-time absence/extended leave

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request, as well as the school's policy and current Government guidelines.

Any request should be made as soon as possible by:

Email	attendance@liden.excalibur.org.uk
In person at the school office	Please ask to speak to Mrs Dunn, Attendance Officer, who will take the details of the request

Please note term time absence will not be approved for the following requests:

- **Holidays:** From the 1st September 2013, the law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.
- Extended visits to family overseas
- A child's birthday
- To care for other family members
- To interpret for other family members
- No school uniform/shoes
- Friendship problems or issues with learning
- Head lice
- Family anniversaries
- Travel problems

There may be additional circumstances, such as school refusal, where the decision to authorise or not will be decided on a case-by-case basis, and the final decision will rest with the school.

In addition to the circumstances listed above, examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- No explanation has been given by the parent/carer;
- School is not satisfied with the explanation;
- The pupil is out in the community during school hours, with or without an adult, when they are supposedly off school ill (unless attending a medical appointment).

Authorised absence

Illness

The question that parents often face is: whether their child can go to school or nursery if they are feeling unwell? The advice from the Royal College of Paediatric and Child health provide the following guidance to parents/carers:

Sickness and Diarrhoea
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's position is that children can return to school 48hours after their last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.
Headache Earache and Stomach ache
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with headache, earache or stomach ache can go to school - just let the staff know they have felt unwell. • Give paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink.
Coughs colds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting. • Children should be given paracetamol, plenty of fluids to drink and can be sent to school.

For further information on a range of other conditions that cause children to be unwell- please go to <https://what0-18.nhs.uk/parents/carers/worried-your-child-unwell/child-unwell-ok-go-nurseryschool>

Valid reasons for authorised absence

Medical and dental appointments

Parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards or send him/her to school beforehand).

Travellers

Pupils travelling for occupational purposes – Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

Education activities

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities.

Exceptional circumstances (at the discretion of the Principal, who will make the final judgment):

- One-off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence. The pupil's overall attendance will be taken into account when deciding to authorise or not authorise.
- Religious observance – where **the day** is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body or from the Local Authority to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions.
- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness.
- Funeral of immediate family member.
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- One day of absence could be authorised for a wedding of an immediate family member and the invitation has been provided as evidence.

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.

Persistent and Severe absence

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance falls below **90%** or have developed a pattern of persistent lateness - defined as **12** unauthorised absences due to lateness in any 6-week period – are classed as a persistent absentee.

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Missing 10% of the school year is the equivalent to missing at least half a day per week.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

Children classed as persistent absentees will be tracked and monitored carefully.

Staff Training

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

Promoting Attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at Liden Academy. Below are the processes and procedures the school will use to promote good attendance:

Pupil rewards

We would like all children to surpass **95%** as we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe that our children can be amongst the best in Swindon. The house team with highest attendance at the end of term will have a non-uniform day reward.

Monitoring of attendance

The school will analyse attendance data termly (six times a year) to identify patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with: unusual patterns of absence, Monday and/or Friday absences, lateness, periods of extended absence, unauthorised absences, and persistent absence. The evaluation will include:

- The circumstances of all children with attendance below **95%** will be considered.
- Children with absence below **90%** will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) as part of our ongoing partnership working.
- Persistent Absence – The Attendance Officer will monitor children who are persistently absent on a daily basis.

3 Stage Monitoring process: ensure parents understand the impact and possible consequence of further absence.

Letter 1 below 95% - letter to make parents aware that their child's attendance is below expected. School will monitor attendance over the next term.

Letter 2 below 92% – end of term letter warning parent that their child's attendance is nearing Persistent Absence and offer support to help improve this. Medical evidence maybe requested for absences.

Letter 3 below 85% –invite parents to a meeting to discuss how to improve attendance. Minutes taken and action plan agreed (Appendix 2). 6 weeks given to see improvement. If no improvement, school may refer to EWO for further intervention.

First-day calling

Liden Academy has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be sent a text and if no response is received, they 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 parent's knowledge. Any reasons given for lateness will be entered into the BROMCOM database in order to help identify any trends that may occur.

Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a period of time (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without permission, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans are put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 4 weeks. It is explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Referral to the Education Welfare Officer (Legal Officer)

If a child has poor attendance, parents/carers are expected to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Team.

Fixed penalty notices

The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the EWO can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

This policy is linked to:

- Anti-Bullying policy
- SEN policy
- Intimate Care policy
- Behaviour and Discipline policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (EAT)
- Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe In Education (Sept 22)
- The school's staff code of conduct (EAT)
- The safeguarding response for children missing in education
- First Aid and Medical needs policy (EAT)
- Health and Safety policy (EAT)
- Looked after Children policy
- Swindon's Neglect Framework

Appendix 1 School Absence Graduated Response

Stages	Action	+ Outcomes	- Outcome
1	Attendance below 95% Send letter 1		
2 (Wk 4-6)	Absence review 4-6 weeks after 1 st letter	Improved-just monitor	Still below – send second letter.
3	Attendance still below 95%. Send letter 2.		
4	Meeting with parents to create action plan for 4 weeks		
5 (Wk7)	Review action plan	Improved-just monitor	Refer to EWO
6	Refer to EWO Send parent letter 2		

Appendix 2:

Liden Academy School – Individual Attendance Action Plan

Child's Name:

Year Group/Class

Current Attendance Rate:

Date:

Present:

Issue Identified	Actions	Person Responsible	By When

Review Date:

Signed:

Signed (school):

Signed (EWO):