

**Attendance Policy – September 2023**

Low Road and Windmill Music Federation believes that every child has the right to full time education to maximise their full potential.

***The Attendance Policy aims to:***

* ***Raise and maintain levels of attendance so that every child has the best possible chance to succeed.***
* ***Raise attainment and achievement levels by having high expectations of attendance.***
* ***Work effectively with our various partners to maintain high attendance levels.***

We know that all children benefit from attending school regularly and arriving at school in good time. We take seriously the responsibility of monitoring and promoting the regular and timely attendance of all our children. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential; they help children to be successful and promote important lifelong skills and habits. We know that regularly arriving late or having time off seriously disrupts learning, hinders progress and affects short and long term outcomes.

Encouraging good attendance is the shared responsibility of schools, parents/carers and partners within our cluster of schools.

* Schools have a responsibility to create an ethos and learning environment where each member of the school community feels they belong and are valued and which encourages children to take part.
* Parents and carers have a responsibility to see that their children attend school in order to receive the appropriate education. They should encourage their children to enjoy and achieve during their time at school, value their relationship with staff and peers and re-iterate the positive experiences school can provide.
* The Cluster has a responsibility to support families and schools in promoting and maintaining regular school attendance.

**Types of Absence**

**Authorised Absence:**

This is where schools have been provided with a good reason for absence i.e. when a child is genuinely ill, in hospital, where there has been a family bereavement or exceptional circumstances. An authorised absence requires a written or telephone communication from the parent or carer or medical examiner. A child’s or siblings own word cannot be taken as reason for absence.

**Authorised Planned Leave in Exceptional Circumstances**

In all cases an attendance record of at least 96% is required for any authorised absence leave to be considered. Each case will be considered individually but usually must meet the criteria below

* Funeral of a close family member
* 1 day for the wedding of a family member
* Participation in a sporting event at city, regional or national level
* Theatre performances ( only authorised if a recognised licence is required )
* Recognised examinations for music or dance
* Other exceptional circumstances agreed on an individual basis by the Executive Head Teacher

*The list above of exceptional circumstances, have been agreed by all the Primary Schools in the Jess Cluster.*

**Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absence is most frequently defined as absence where no explanation has been given by parents however there are some instances where planned absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Examples of these instances are listed below.

* All holidays will be unauthorised including long weekends and preparation before or recovery from a holiday.
* Visits to relatives
* Visits to events
* Modelling auditions
* Birthdays and shopping trips
* Sleeping in after a late night.
* Family day out.

If school does not receive contact from parents and carers regarding a child’s absence, then phone calls and texts home will be made by school on the first day of absence. In the event of an extended absence, subsequent contact will be made by the school.

Children who return to school following an unauthorised absence will require a written note otherwise the absence will remain unauthorised.

Schools are required to report unauthorised absences to the Local Authority, and Parents/Carers may be contacted to follow up any concerns.

**Persistent Absence**

The DfE categorises Persistent Absentees (PA) as follows:-

If a child has 20 days of absence they are considered a PA until the end of the academic year. Parents and carers of children whose attendance drops below 90% will be contacted by school to discuss further.

**Term-time Holidays**

Each school expects that parents and carers will take their holidays during the approved school breaks. It should be noted that there are 175 days each year when children and young people are on holiday from school.

**Leeds City Council Guidance.**

*“Pupils attend school for a maximum of 190 days each academic year. Full attendance is vital for your child’s educational progress. Leeds City Council expects all parents and carers to ensure that their children attend school whenever possible. Absences due to holidays, taken during term time can seriously impact on a pupil’s academic attainment.*

There is no entitlement to time off during term time**.**

**Illness**

If a child is ill or unable to come to school then parents or carers should contact the school office before 9.00am. If a message has not been received by 9:30am we will endeavour to contact you.If school does not receive notification of a child’s absence it will be marked as unauthorised.

For persistent illnesses we require a copy of a doctor’s note, appointment card or prescription. Home visits may also be carried out during these absences.

**Lateness**

Children who arrive after 8.45am are classed as late.Children arriving after 9.00am will be allocated a U mark which is the equivalent to an unauthorised absence unless a genuine reason is given U will be changed to just late. School will contact parents and carers if they are concerned about a child’s punctuality**.**

**Parents and Carers can help by:**

* Being proud of your child’s achievements and talk to them about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
* Ensuring that your child attends school every single day unless they are ill or any other authorised reason.
* Making sure they leave home in good time and that they arrive in time for the start of the school day.
* Letting school know as soon as possible before 9.00am, why your child is unable to attend school on the first day of their absence.
* Arranging routine medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during the holidays.
* Keeping school informed if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
* Keeping school informed of circumstances at home which may be affecting your child’s attendance.
* Sending a note to school when your child returns, explaining why they were absent.
* Responding positively to any requests for information about lateness or absence.
* Keeping school up to date with contact details, such as new mobile phone numbers.

**Safeguarding & Responding to Absence**

Safeguarding is the highest priority for all staff at Low Road and Windmill Music Federation. We recognise the clear relationship between children being in school and being able to effectively discharge our safeguarding duties. As DFE guidance states; when children are not in school, they miss the protection and opportunities school can provide and can become more vulnerable to harm. Therefore, the following steps are undertaken to ensure the safeguarding of all of our children:

• First day absence texts and calls

• Follow up phone calls if there is no response

• If a student has five days unauthorised absence we will undertake a home visit

• If a student has between five and ten days authorised absence, we may also undertake a home visit in

order to support their return to school

**CME referrals:** Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence, or

is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, enquiries will be made to

establish the whereabouts of the student. If this is unsuccessful, and school does not have reasonable

grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause, the

school will make a referral to the CME Team

**School will encourage good attendance and continue to raise standards by:**

* Acknowledging and rewarding good attendance and timekeeping.
* Recording and monitoring children’s attendance, timekeeping and medical appointments.
* Updating Parents and carers at the end of each term of their child’s level of attendance.
* Contacting parents and carers as soon as possible when a child does not attend and when school has not had a message to explain their absence. This safeguards children who make their own way to school.
* Making initial enquiries of families who are not attending regularly, outlining any concerns and making clear the school and Local Authority’s expectations with regard to regular school attendance.
* Reporting on children’s attendance to parents and carers, governors, Local Authority and DFE.
* Attendance will always be topic at parent consultation meetings.
* Create bespoke packages for persistent absentees such as: nurture, bespoke timetable, check-in phone calls, home visits, animal therapy and online learning where necessary

Attendance Team

Low Road and Windmill Music Federation.