



## Attendance Policy

### Aims

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At The Emmaus Federation, we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

The Federation is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The Federation believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the Federation will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

It is recognised that

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

## **Leave of Absence**

**There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.**

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave Request' form and any request can only be authorised where school accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Any parent/carer requesting leave of absence of more than 5 days will be asked to make an appointment to see the Head of School and/or the Executive Headteacher/ Chair of Governors to explain the circumstances. Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation, a penalty notices will be issued where the trigger of 5 days is met.

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013).

**Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised:**

- during the first term, when a pupil is just starting at school, as it is very important for the child to settle into their new class;
- during an assessment/test period – Key Stage 2 SATs
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence.

### **Absence for religious reasons**

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.

If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

**We expect the following from all our pupils:**

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

**We expect the following from parents**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

### **Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- A quality education.

### **Responding to Non-Attendance**

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone
- If there is no response by 12 noon, Lincolnshire Education Welfare Services will be contacted for further guidance. This may include action to inform the police to seek assurance that the child and family are safe and well. The school will act under the guidance received.
- Pupil attendance records will be monitored informally on an ongoing basis with mechanisms in place for schools staff to raise their concerns about individual pupils to school leadership. Pupil attendance record data will be analysed at the end of each calendar month and at the end of each school term, looking for patterns and individuals of concern.
- In cases of repeated poor attendance a record will be started for each case recording steps taken and outcomes.
- Parents may be invited in for an informal chat, a letter may be issued or a Pupil Attendance Panel may be convened.
- Where Non Attendance continues a referral will be made to the EWO and the school will continue to work with the family under their guidance

### **Responding to Persistent Lateness**

- All children who enter the school after 9am will have to enter through the main front door past the school office

- All children who enter the school after the registers have closed must register with the office and will sign a late record.
- The late records will be checked weekly by the Head of School.
- The Head of School will contact and work with the parents of identified persistent late arrivers to resolve the issue.
- Should this not result in improved punctuality Lincolnshire Education Welfare Services will be involved.

### **Reintegration:**

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99).
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the staff notices/daily briefings.

### **School Organisation**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

#### **Executive Head Teacher:**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.

- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.
- To liaise with the EWO.

### **Head of School** (with responsibility for Pupil Support)

- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with EWO.

### **Class Teacher**

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence
- To have a classroom display showing information on attendance.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.

### **Governors:**

- Governor(s) may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Governors can play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

**Parents:**

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Provide signed and dated absence notes for all absences.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

**Education Welfare Service:**

The Education Welfare Service has been described as the “attendance enforcement arm” of most local authorities (DES 1991) which complements the role of the school.

Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service will strive to provide a service that recognises the uniqueness of the school and the community it serves.

In accordance with the EWS Service Remit and Procedures we can support schools in a variety of ways:

- We will liaise with identified school staff.
- Where a referral is accepted, we will undertake home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- Through group work with identified groups of pupils.
- Where necessary we will instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LEA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates’ Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court.
- We will accept referrals that meet the EWS referral criteria, initiate contact with parents or carers and undertake assessments.
- We will plan and review casework.
- We will provide feedback to schools.
- We can offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in performing.
- We will support schools in the establishment and management of school attendance panels.
- We will support schools in the use of penalty notices and parenting contracts within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

## **Office Staff:**

School administrative staff can play a vital role in supporting the school's attendance and absence management strategies.

- Produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly % information.
- Telephone absence slips to be put in registers.
- Maintain a late book.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

Absences which are classified as authorised may be authorised on the basis of evidence from several sources e.g. school, parents, prospective employer, and health services etc. In addition to identifying truancy, it is the purpose also to identify parentally condoned absence, which may adversely affect a child's education. A parent sending a note to school stating the child has been absent through illness may well be "authorising" the absence, but this may not make the absence valid within law unless authorised by the Head Teacher. Schools will need to continue to be vigilant regarding authorised absence patterns, in order that parentally condoned absence is dealt with effectively. Absence from school, for any reason, can have a negative impact on a child's educational progress. Absence due to prolonged illness / medical grounds <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions> may require referral to The Pilgrim Hospital School <http://www.pilgrim.lincs.sch.uk/> The responsibility for determining whether or not any absence is to be authorised rests ultimately with the Head Teacher

## **Unauthorised absence**

Includes any day when a child should be in attendance at school and they are absent without the authorisation of the school (unauthorised absence) and includes unauthorised holidays during term time and persistent late arrival at school beyond the registration period. Whilst the case law now confirms that any unauthorised absence is technically an offence it is also clear that this should be tempered by sensible policy decisions to ensure that those children who are most vulnerable in terms of missing education are the focus of prosecution cases. On this basis the local authority, Lincolnshire County Council, specify that a minimum of 15% unauthorised absence, which equates to 4.5 school days or more, over a continuous six week period is to be accepted for a prosecution. This can be subject to exceptions where there are other circumstances surrounding the case which would lead to a prosecution being in the public interest particularly where the interests of the child would favour prosecution.

## **Term Time Holidays**

This is a matter that requires specific mention as this is not a separate offence but is just one form of unauthorised absence. As the child's absence does not fall under any of the statutory defence discussed above unless they have been given permission by the school to be absent from school making the absence authorised. It is now the law that a head teacher of a school may not permit a child to be absent during term time for any purpose unless the parent has requested the absence and the head teacher has determined that there are exceptional circumstances which allows the head to authorise the absence. As stated above a term time holiday which is 4.5 school days or more, over a continuous six week period, will trigger a fixed penalty notice.

## **Persistent Absence**

The DFE's definition of Persistent Absence is:

***“any pupil who at any point in the year has accumulated absence of 10% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised”***. The DFE use the school census data to identify individual schools that have high rates of persistent absence. The Education Welfare Service can provide casework and strategic support to schools to address Persistent Absence.

## **Encouraging attendance through good practice and rewards: (Examples)**

- Weekly attendance trophy to show the percentage of attendance for each class in the previous week, with a congratulations section for the highest attending class in celebration assembly.
- Head teachers certificate for any child that achieves 100% attendance per term.
- Recording of good attendance on individual Records of Achievement.
- An 'improved attendance' letter to parents for any child who has made additional effort to improve their attendance.
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of transition into or out of the school. Such opportunities could be between Pre School & Reception, KS1/KS2, KS2/KS3, Mainstream/Specialist, new to the Country/County. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the educational establishments involved.
- Working with parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.



## **Responding to non attendance:**

### **When a pupil does not attend the school the following procedures are in place:**

- If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures should be followed immediately.
- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/guardian, the parents/guardian will be contacted on the day of the absence by text or phone call.
- Where there is no response a phone call will be made on following day, or a letter sent to attempt to identify a reason for the child being absent. Where there is no response, a letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absence, or there may be a visit from a member of the school staff or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) where the Service is involved.
- Should a child be absent with no explanation given for a period of 5 days a referral will be made to the Children Missing From Education Team via a phone call to Lincolnshire County Council Customer Service Centre via 01522 782111.
- Should a child be absent for a total of four weeks without any explanation, and after due investigation, the school is entitled to remove this child from the register. Parents would then have to re-apply for a place in the school should they wish their child to return.
- Where non-attendance continues the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and further action planned. Parents may be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, EWO, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- **The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95% attendance** and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. Our target is to achieve better than this, however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.
- Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our school newsletter and we ask for your full support.
- If this target has not been met you will be asked to attend an initial School Attendance Panel meeting with the Head of School and/or Head teacher. Targets for the next time period will be set.

- Should this target not be reached you will be invited to a 2nd School Attendance Panel meeting which will give you further opportunity to meet a new attendance target.
- If at this 3<sup>rd</sup> School Attendance Panel meeting the target is not met an Educational Welfare Officer may become involved in the monitoring.
- If at the end of this monitoring period there are ongoing unauthorised absences these could result in a parenting contract being requested or legal options being considered such as, Education Supervision Orders, Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter / penalty or a Formal Legal Warning Letter being issued in regards to prosecution.

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare/school-attendance-the-law/29470.article>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

### **Effect of Penalty Notice being issued**

- The penalty notice is presumed to be served on the parent / carer to whom it is sent on the second working day after it was posted.
- If a parent / carer pays the penalty notice within 21 days from the date it is served the sum due from the parent to discharge the penalty notice is £60.00
- The parent / carer can still pay the notice after 21 days but the payment increases to £120 and this must be paid before 28 days have passed from the date of service.
- If a parent / carer pays the amount due within the times set out above then no further action will be taken against that parent for the offence on the date(s) set out in the penalty notice.
- Once a penalty notice has been issued no prosecution for the offence detailed in the penalty notice can be brought against the parent until the payment period has passed and the fixed penalty has not been paid.
- All payments must be made to the Local Authority.

### **Procedure for Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)**

The school will follow the Lincolnshire County Council Non-

## **School Attendance Prosecution Policy 2017.**

Lincolnshire County Council is responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices in Lincolnshire. The Local Authority will ensure that penalty notices are properly issued and will only issue them for offences where the Local Authority is satisfied that the matter meets the threshold for a prosecution.

When requesting a FPN it is important to include the details of those parents/carers who have day-to-day care of the child (meaning those who reside with the child).

Equally it is important that warning letters go separately to each parent, this is so that if the case does go to prosecution we can clearly evidence that both parents have been clearly informed. (templates of these letters are available from the Inclusion & Attendance Team).

### **Use of Fixed Penalty Notices**

- Regulations allow both the Local Authority and schools to issue fixed penalty notices. Payment is always made to Local Authority.
- Fixed penalties are only one of the tools available to the Local Authority in tackling school attendance and anti-social behaviour issues and where thought appropriate alternative approaches such as Education Supervision Orders and prosecution may be utilised at the discretion of the Local Authority.
- If a penalty notice is issued whether paid or not it may be used in evidence in subsequent criminal proceedings in relation to either non-school attendance or being in a public place during school hours whilst excluded from school.

### **Where a Penalty Notice may be issued**

Fixed term penalties will only be issued in circumstance where the LA is satisfied that the criteria for prosecution would be met if the option of a fixed penalty notice is not taken up by the parent. The circumstances in which a notice may be issued are:

- Where a child is absent from school due to unauthorised absence of 15% or above over a six week period.
- Where a child is present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of any exclusion

### **Leave of absence during term time.**

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have removed the reference to holidays during term time and now provides that a leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made in advance to the school and the school consider that the leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application.**

What amounts to "exceptional circumstances" is a matter for the discretion of the Headteacher and should be judged on a case by case basis but it is unlikely to amount to an exceptional circumstance if it is merely claimed that a holiday can only be afforded in term time or that a parent is unable to take leave during school holidays (this is a matter between the parent and their employer). The Headteacher will also consider asking for evidence of the circumstances that has arisen where appropriate.

### **Procedure for Issuing Penalty Notices**

- Penalty Notices will only be issued within the terms of the Code of Conduct. The Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Team are responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices in Lincolnshire. The Local Authority will ensure that penalty notices are properly issued and will only issue them for offences where the Local Authority is satisfied that the matter meets the threshold for a prosecution.
- Requests for fixed penalty notices can be found on Lincolnshire County Council's website, <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare>.
- Once the application is completed it should be emailed with the correct supporting information to [fjn@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:fjn@lincolnshire.gov.uk). The Inclusion & Attendance Team will acknowledge receipt of the application and notify school once the period of 28 days have passed and advise whether or not the fine has been paid.
- Requests for the issue of fixed penalty notices will be accepted from Schools in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire Police and from within the Local Authority and must be in writing.
- Where an application for a formal warning or fixed penalty notice is accepted the Local Authority will issue the warning or notice in writing to the parent(s) concerned and where there is more than one parent a separate written notification will be sent to each parent for each child that the notice relates to. The notice will be sent to the parent by first class post.

## **Appeal against the Penalty Notice**

There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice and a parent can either accept and pay the same or decline payment subject to them being aware that further action as set out below may be taken by the Local Authority if the penalty notice remains unpaid.

However, the Local Authority has the discretion to withdraw the notice if they are satisfied that:

- The fixed penalty notice has been sent to the wrong person

## **Liaising with External Agencies**

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the EWS. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people. The EWS may be able to help schools establish multi-agency meetings or may be able to advise on how schools can become involved in existing local arrangements.

**Other Agencies** to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police

## **Procedure for late collection of Children**

If a child is to be collected late from school parents are requested to inform the school by telephone at their earliest convenience. If it is not possible for the child to go home with an alternative agreed adult then provision will be made within school to keep the child safe. This provision will involve no less than two members of staff.

In the event of persistent late collection the parents would be invited to discuss the matter with the Headteacher. Should further late collections persist without good cause the issue would be regarded as a matter for Child Protection investigation.

## **Procedure for the management of missing children**

In the event of suspecting a missing children, senior management would be alerted and an immediate search made of the school and surrounding area. If this did not locate the child a register would be taken of all children and a further search made. If this did not locate the child the police would be called and the parents informed.

## **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

**Date of Next Review:** May 2021

Signed .....

Mrs CV Collett

Executive Headteacher

May 2018

Signed .....

Mrs R Blowers

Chair of Governors

## **References**

Policy refers to;

**The Department for Education's statutory guidance publications for schools and local authorities.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools#behaviour-and-attendance>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/departmental-advice-schools#behaviour-and-attendance>

**School Attendance** – Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

**Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour** – Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, local authorities and the police.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

**LCC Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct 2014**

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare?tab=downloads>

**Lincolnshire County Council 'Every Day Matters' An Attendance Strategy**

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare?tab=downloads>

**Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions Sept 2014**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

**The statutory special educational needs and disability (SEND) system for children and young people aged 0 to 25 from 1 September 2014.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

**A guide for schools on the support system for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-setting>