

**Lindley CE (VA) Infant School**  
**Attendance Policy**

*Agreed by Governors July 2013 – to be reviewed July 2016*

**Introduction**

Lindley Infant School is a Rights Respecting School. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

*All children have the right to an education. (Article 28)*

Lindley Infant school is an outstanding school and all our children play their part in making it such a successful school. The school aims and mission statement encourage all members of the school community to reach out for excellence. In order for all our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education here, it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school on time every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

At Lindley infant school we will aim to ensure that:

- we provide a welcoming atmosphere which will encourage children to want to come to school.
- the school environment is one in which everyone feels valued.
- children are welcomed into the classroom by the class teacher.
- all children are aware of the importance of coming to school through their class charter.
- each child arrives promptly and regularly for the school's first session at 8.55am.
- all doors will open from 8.45 am to allow children time to enter school earlier and be prepared for their learning on time.
- communicate regularly with parents to ensure that they recognise the vital role that they play in ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time.

**Why regular attendance is important**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will have a significant effect on their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Developing children's social skills are an important part of their education and any period of absence can make it difficult for them to re-integrate with their friendship groups. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Promoting regular attendance**

All children will be encouraged and praised for regular and punctual attendance. They will not be punished for lateness or absence as this is clearly the responsibility of the parent. A regular attendance pattern for all children is the responsibility of parents and all members of the school staff.

We will all work together to promote regular attendance by:

- informing parents on a termly basis of attendance levels in school
- reporting the details of each child's attendance in the annual school report to parents
- contacting parents should their child's attendance fall below 90%

- reminding parents when a child is persistently late
- praising children for regular and punctual attendance
- celebrating good attendance by
  - displaying each class' weekly attendance
  - rewarding 100% weekly attendance in each class with a certificate and the school attendance trophy
  - awarding termly and annual certificates for 100% attendance.
- monitoring attendance levels thoroughly and regularly
- keeping records of term time holidays
- keeping records of any extended holiday with reasons for the holiday

We understand that children get ill from time to time but if parents are experiencing any other problems in getting children to school, they should always contact school. We are keen to work with parents to help with attendance difficulties and if there are issues preventing any child's full attendance parents should contact school to discuss them. Approaching attendance matters in this way is the most successful way of solving any problems.

### **The School Day**

The registers are taken electronically in each class at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon session. Registers will close at 9.15am and 1.25pm respectively.

Morning Session	8.55am-11.55am
Afternoon Session	1.10pm-3.25pm

All doors are opened from 8.45am by adults who will welcome the children into school. This gives a window of time for parents to drop their children off in the knowledge that their children are safely at school. It also enables children to enter school calmly and gives them time to prepare themselves for their learning to start promptly at 8.55am

### **Absence procedures**

If a child is going to be absent from school for any reason parents should notify the school office as soon as possible before 9.15 am giving a reason for absence:

- by letter in the child's book bag if the absence is planned
- by phone (01484) 222118/9 (answerphone available outside office hours)
- by email ([office.lindleyinf@edukirklees.net](mailto:office.lindleyinf@edukirklees.net))

*The law requires the school to record any unexplained absences as 'unauthorised absences'.*

The school office will make a phone call to parents on a daily basis when no explanation for the absence has been received.

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need up to date contact numbers at all times.

Parents should make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. They should inform the school, by letter/e-mail, in advance, if their child has to leave school early or during the school day. Pupils will only be allowed out of school during the day if they are collected from school by a

parent or other adult that the parent has notified us about. Parents must call at the office in order to sign their child in/out of school.

### **Types of absences**

In school each half day absence is classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. It is the school's responsibility to record all absences in this way.

**Authorised absences:** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid reason. These reasons are illness, medical appointments or emergency dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, religious observance, family bereavement, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

**Unauthorised absences:** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been authorised by the school. The school has a responsibility to report any persistent absence of this type to the local authority which can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained by the parent
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark – this will be recorded as L in the register
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- persistent minor ailments without the support of a doctor's note
- collecting or taking relatives to the airport without prior discussion with the headteacher.
- family parties other than religious observance

Parents may not authorise their child's absence as only the school can do this after considering the explanation provided by the parent. Lindley CE (VA) Infant School uses absence coding in line with the Local Authority (LA) guidance. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.

### **Reasons for absence**

#### **Holidays in term time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's education as much as any other absence. Parents are asked to prioritise their child's education by using the school holiday weeks for family holidays.

The amendments made in 2013 to the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) make it clear that that head teachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Under the regulations it is for the Head Teacher to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

**Exceptional Circumstances:**

In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Parents/carers may not authorise their child's absence as only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parent/carer. The School uses absence coding in line with the DfE guidance. Should parents/carers fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence the school will record such absence as unauthorised.

**Days of religious observance**

Many of the main Christian festivals take place during the school holidays. The Muslim celebrations of Eid Ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha move forward approximately two weeks every year and can change according to when the moon is sighted. We would authorize up to 2 days absence for Eid Ul Fitr, and 1 day of absence for Eid ul Adha providing we have been notified of the child's absence. All other acts of religious observance will be considered when requests are made to the headteacher.

**Special occasions**

A request for a child to attend a special occasion during school time, e.g. family wedding must be made in advance and the Headteacher will make the decision as to whether the absence will be authorised. Parents will be notified of the Headteacher's decision in writing.

**Bereavement**

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The Headteacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

**Medical Absence**

Where children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over 5 days, the school will, if requested, send material home so that they can keep up with school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period or be a repetitive absence (such as necessary stays in hospital, the school will contact the Pupil Referral Service so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given tuition outside of school.

**SEN/Disability/Medical Needs**

The primary aim of educating children and young people who have SEN or medical needs (including disability) is to minimise, as far as possible, the disruption to normal schooling by continuing education as normally as the incapacity allows. This applies equally to all those pupils who are unable to attend school because of medical needs, both those who are physically ill or injured and those with mental health problems. Particular care is needed to ensure that there is adequate provision for pupils suffering from mental illness. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that attendance levels can be maximized by working closely with parents and external agencies included in the IEP/care plan.

## **Lateness**

All pupils are expected to be in the classroom by 8.55am ready to start their learning. This is an important part of the day as this is when the register is taken and when the children receive vital information about their learning and news for the day. Pupils arriving late to school can disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence in the future.

## **How we manage lateness**

In the morning all school doors will be closed at 8.55am. All pupils arriving after this time must enter school through the front door. Parents will be asked to sign their children in the 'late arrivals book' together with their time of arrival and the reason for the lateness. The school closely monitors any reoccurring

At 9.15am the registers will be closed. Any child arriving after the register has been called will be recorded as late for that session by the office. If a child arrives after the register has closed but parents provide them with a note detailing a reason acceptable to the school, they are marked as authorised absence for that session. If they are late and fail to provide an acceptable reason they will be marked as unauthorised absence for the whole of that session.

If a child has a persistent late record, parents will be asked to meet with the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher and ultimately, if necessary, the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer to resolve the problem. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. Parents should approach school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

## **Persistent Absenteeism**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their absence level is 20% or more across the school year regardless of whether the absence is authorized or unauthorized. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

## **Attendance and Pupil Support Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the headteacher and class teacher 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 Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority who will also try to resolve the situation by agreement. However if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Local Authority.

Parents may also wish to contact the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

## **School Responsibilities**

The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.

Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance they have been given. The registers will be inspected periodically in order to ensure that they are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.

Should a class teacher have particular concerns about an individual child's attendance or punctuality the Headteacher should be informed.

If a child is absent the class teacher will not enter any code in the register, leaving the office staff to select the correct code for that absence. The school will aim to contact by telephone, any parent who has failed to inform the school of the reason for an absence including first day calling, the primary aim being to check on the safety of the child. This phone call should be done, wherever possible, by 9.30am.

All absence notes from parents/carers should be sent to the school office to be held in the attendance file. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns or queries should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher, who may then choose to speak to the parents concerned.

This attendance policy will be reviewed in January 2014