



## **Attendance Monitoring Policy**

**Completed by: Yvonne Heywood**

**Submission to Governors: May 2022**

**Formal ratification by Governors: May 2022**

**Review : Summer 2024**

### ***Policy Development & Consultation***

Ladywood staff have contributed to the development of this policy during staff and curriculum meetings, and have been consulted throughout the process.

### ***Background Information about the School***

Ladywood is a mixed school for pupils aged 4 - 11 years, who have complex learning difficulties. Our pupils come from a large, and very mixed area, and the majority of pupils are transported to school by the local authority. At Ladywood we aim to provide all our children with a broad and relevant education. We do this in a positive environment that reflects our commitment to high expectations for all.

### ***Philosophy***

At Ladywood we provide a safe learning environment which encourages all pupils to attend and be punctual whatever their level of ability or specific needs. We pride ourselves on high standards of pupil attendance and we expect that all children will attend school as long as they are fit and well enough to do so in line with the expectations of 380 half days (190 full days) for an academic year. In our attempts to maintain these standards we adhere to

a set of rigorous guidelines which value, and rely on the relationship with parents and other professionals (transport, school nurse and Early Interventions etc).

This policy reflects the responsibilities for school attendance (DfE 2022) in respect of pupil attendance through:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including pupil absence
- Have robust systems that follow up absence and develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence
- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents/carers relating to school attendance that identifies barriers to good attendance and address them.
- Use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- To work with external agencies to support all children to have good attendance.

We believe a positive educational experience helps to give pupils the best possible opportunities to achieve their potential. Ladywood's high quality curriculum offer means that our children want to come to school because we make learning irresistible. Regular attendance and punctuality are important for all pupils to maximise their academic, social and personal development.

A child's attendance at school is the responsibility of parents/carers. Ladywood School works actively with parents/carers to encourage a regular pattern of attendance is maintained to ensure our children:

- Benefit from the educational opportunities provided, absence affects the pattern of or children's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and that of others.
- Experience a broad and balanced creative curriculum
- Build on their learning experiences to achieve their potential
- Develop their social and personal skills
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding; Pupils may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.
- Have their legal entitlement to education; ensuring regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility and permitting
- Absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law.

## **PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help all stakeholders to focus on this, the school will report to parents/carers at least on a termly basis on how pupils are performing in school, what their

attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments. This may be through Parent's Evenings, Review Meetings or phone calls.

### **Our objectives are:**

1. To improve the overall percentage of pupils attending school.
2. To have high aspirations for our pupils in terms of attendance.
3. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
4. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
5. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
6. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
7. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
8. To work with families to recognise and remove any perceived barriers relating to good attendance.
9. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions.
10. To promote effective partnerships with the Attendance Service and with other services and agencies.
11. To recognise the needs of individual pupils to support their attendance.
12. To provide support for pupils who have extended absence including planned reintegration following significant periods of absence.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **THE OFFICE**

##### **Punctuality**

Any pupil arriving after 9:30 am should report to the school office. The office should record time of arrival on Sims and enter a 'late' mark. Pupils arriving after this time are marked as U (late after registers have closed). If this is due to transport issues then this should be recorded appropriately. Consistent transport problems should be reported to the SLT member with responsibility for transport.

##### **Absence**

On the first day of absence if the school has not been notified why a pupil is absent the school office will contact parents/carers by phone to inform them their child is absent, enquire about the reason for the absence and remind them of their need to inform the school about absence. This will be followed by a text if no contact is made on the first day. For those children who are being closely monitored all information will be recorded on CPOMs before 11.00am.

In addition emergency contacts will be called and further investigation of absence, e.g. checking with medical will be done, to ascertain why the child is absent

Absences for LAC or children on child protection plans will be immediately reported to the designated social worker and Early Intervention Team. Actions will be recorded on CPOMs.

If no contact has been made after 2 days, a home visit will occur by 2 members of Ladywood staff including a SLT member.

The office staff will ensure that current contact details are held on central file (SIMS.net) and updated as required.

When confirmation of absence or appointments has been received the absence will be authorised, unless there are attendance concerns which require further confirmation. This will be recorded on CPOMs to alert SLT.

## **CLASS TEAMS**

### **General Responsibilities**

- Accurate completion of SIMs
- Recording of information about pupil's absence or punctuality
- Maintaining Strong respectful relationships with families to secure trust and engagement, enabling school to both support and challenge when needed
- Ensuring written notes, Class Dojo messages and appointment information is sent to the school office
- Reminding pupils, where appropriate, and parents/carers about responsibilities related to attendance and punctuality
- Maintaining daily contact with pupils and families to support learning and links with school where absence is extended including liaising with SLT and outside agencies where necessary

### **Punctuality**

The school day starts at 8.50 am when pupils arrive on transport. Registers close at the close at 9:30 am. If a pupil arrives in class after the close of registration they receive a late mark and the time of arrival is recorded on SIMS by the school office.

### **Absences**

It is the class team's responsibility to ensure that an accurate mark is entered in the register for both the morning and afternoon session each day. In the case of known reasons for absence, this should be recorded on SIMS by the class team. If the class team has cause for concern regarding the attendance of a pupil this should be recorded on CPOMs and marked as attendance.

The class team will promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality with parents and carers via structured conversations. Initial first day

contact will be made by the office, next day and then everyday contact to be then maintained by class team.

When there is an unexplained absence by a child where there are safeguarding concerns the class team will record this on CPOMs and alert SLT.

Class teams should ensure that all notes, Dojo messages and written information from parents about attendance/punctuality is relayed to the school office.

## **MULT-AGENCY PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

In order to maintain good communication and support safeguarding of pupils the school will seek further information about known absence and work with health, social care and the Early Intervention Team to support pupils in attending school. During weekly SLT meetings absence and attendance issues related to specific pupils will be shared and action plans formulated.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Punctuality**

The Local Authority Transport team are asked to ensure that buses and taxis arrive at school in time to bring their children into school for 8.50 am.

If arrival after this time is anticipated, transport must inform the school office with an estimated time of arrival. Where buses are consistently late, the member of SLT in charge of transport will contact the Transport Team.

## **SLT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Support staff to deliver high quality teaching and learning that is both engaging and personalised thus ensuring pupils are motivated to attend school.
- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality throughout the school and in communication with parents and carers as appropriate.
- Encourage good attendance through end of year awards/certificates.
- Where other methods of contact have been unsuccessful, will act as a referral point for persistent non-attendance.
- When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 92% in any term without good reason the school will notify parents to discuss concerns and agree referrals. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.
- Analyse attendance figures at least half termly and work with the office to identify families that need support.
- Inform class teams termly of rag rated absence levels of all children, including actions required.

- The Head Teacher will evaluate requests from parents and carers for holiday leave and absence during term time, and give permission provided he/she is satisfied that the request is potentially beneficial to the pupil. The school follows the Statutory Guidance.
- The attendance officer (AHT) will liaise weekly with the administration assistant responsible for attendance, in order to monitor patterns of attendance and decide on support needed..
- The attendance officer will meet termly with the administration assistant responsible for attendance to review the schools procedures and records, but will contact them as necessary regarding concerns. The AO will analyse attendance data and identify attendance concerns. She will contact parents about concerns and where necessary make referrals to the Early Intervention Team.
- Ensure support is given for families who are struggling to support their child to attend school, including referral to school nurse team or Paediatric Learning disabilities via Early Help interventions.
- To work with class teams to support the creation of a holistic learning journey for all our children and families by meeting the needs of the individuals, including looking at attendance and how it affects performance and life chances.
- For those families who need it provide alternative education offers including work from home boxes and remote education access.
- Ensure strong behaviour support systems to support families
- Maintain strong links, seeking advice when necessary, with professionals that support our families including the Early Intervention Team.

## **PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Parents have responsibility to ensure that their child has full attendance at school and is punctual. Where a pupil is unable to attend school, parents must inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence indicating when the pupil will return. On each day of absence the class team will contact parents either via class dojo or by telephone. Work will be sent home if required when absences are long term.

Where medical or other appointments are necessary parents must make every effort to arrange these out of school time. If appointments must be made in school time appointment letters/cards must be sent to the school, in advance.

If no reason is given for a pupil's absence the school will persist in seeking clarification for the absence. If no contact has been made then on day 2 a door step visit from members of Ladywood staff will be initiated.

Ladywood will work closely with families who need support to ensure their child attends school however persistent absence can lead to a referral to the Early Intervention Team and ultimately a fixed penalty notice.

Parents must request holiday leave using the appropriate form to the Head Teacher who will consider the request and may grant permission if appropriate.

Parents are kept up to date with attendance issues and expectations through the school newsletter and individual letters and texts. They must not assume that requests for absence will be approved all requests are considered individually.

### Procedures and Guidelines

If a pupil is absent from school and no clear reason is provided either by parents and carers directly or via passenger escort:-

1. Initial reports to the office via bus registers / phone call from home/ Class Dojo. Information shared with class teams. If message is on Class Dojo class teams to notify the office.
2. Reason for absence recorded in SIMs
3. Office staff to make 1<sup>st</sup> day contact by telephone to parent/carer.
4. If valid reason for absence then office staff to authorise symbol in register.
5. Following 1<sup>st</sup> day contact, if no valid reason is given this will be recorded as unauthorised. Continuing efforts to contact parents/carers will be maintained.
6. If no response to contact by 11.00 am SLT to be informed and, in the case of a LAC or child causing concern, SLT informed and phone call to social worker .
7. 2<sup>nd</sup> day and subsequent daily contact by class team.
8. Two members of staff will undertake any home visits as appropriate.
9. If a child has frequent absence and parents have validated the absence, office staff and SLT will monitor closely the attendance/reasons for absence.
10. Concerns about frequent absence would be shared at SLT & Governor meetings using attendance data. Absences are recorded in the office in SIMs and the absence monitoring file.
11. If a child has an ongoing medical need, resulting in frequent absence, the school nursing team/community paediatrician will be contacted for guidance and advice. Regular contact with the parents/carers will be maintained.
12. A child who has been absent for more than 10 days after an authorised absence or 20 days of consecutive unauthorised absence will be supported in line with "Keeping Children safe in Education" policy and contact will be made with the Local Authority to establish (jointly) their whereabouts

### ABSENCE TERMS

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, as either Authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause:

**Examples of 'authorised' absence:**

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments
- Days of religious observance.
- Exceptional family circumstances, e.g. bereavement.
- School visits.
- An immediate family member is critically/terminally ill
- Families who have been through a traumatic event
- Families where a parent/carer is able to demonstrate clearly (e.g. a letter from an employer which can be verified) that they are restricted to all annual leave within school term time.
- Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive.
- Where a child attends a planned transition visit

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This might include:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Haircuts
- Missed bus
- Overslept
- No uniform
- Birthdays
- Holidays not agreed in advance

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school for varied reasons, this is often linked to the needs of the child. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and exacerbate the problem.

**PUPILS WITH COMPLEX MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

The school recognises that some pupils attending Ladywood have complex medical needs which may on occasions prevent them attending school for frequent or prolonged periods of time. Where a pupil is not able to attend school but is able to access educational activities within their home context, the School will:

- Maintain regular contact with the home
- Provide educational resources for the pupil at home
- Facilitate/enable, where it is required, the parents/carers to be involved in the child's education and to deliver activities when the pupil is well enough

## **ATTENDANCE AT APPOINTMENTS**

Due to the range of needs that our pupils have, attendance at medical appointments may be more frequent during the school day.

All appointments will be monitored by the office staff and recorded as M in the register.

If a child leaves the school premises to attend an appointment, parents/carers will complete the signing out screen.

If a child leaves school due to illness during the school day the signing out screen will also be completed and escorts informed by the class team.

## **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

Holidays in term time are discouraged as a general rule at Ladywood. However, we do understand that family circumstances may mean that this is necessary.

In this case, the following procedure should be followed:-

- Leave of absence forms are available from school and should be completed by parents giving details regarding the planned absence. The exceptional circumstances will be considered by the Head of School.
- Form should be returned to school at least 2 weeks prior to the planned absence.
- The Head Teacher will consider the application and inform parents in writing whether the application has been approved.
- In the case of extended absence from school, a return date must be provided before the absence commences, address while away and other additional information.

## **REPORTING**

Percentage attendance figures are reported to parents in the annual review/EHCP Meeting and to governors through the termly Head Teacher's report.

More regular reports will be made to parents where there are concerns about attendance.

## **MONITORING**

Attendance is routinely monitored with concerns investigated as they arise. All pupils whose attendance falls below 90% are monitored. Individual attendance is measured using SIMS against the following:

<b>Absence Monitoring</b>	
<b>95 %+ attendance</b>	Rewards and recognition given
<b>94 – 90%</b>	Cause for concern – monitor Strategies may include: Contact made with parents (letter/phone call) arranged meetings between parents, pupils, school staff and health professionals to decide on the appropriate strategy home visits alternative transport arrangements temporarily being put in place Referral to outside agencies for support Agreeing and arranging alternative or reduced Curriculum provision as may be temporarily required.
<b>Below 90 % (persistent absence)</b>	Serious cause for concern Contact with parents to discuss strategies to support and raise level of attendance. Monitored half termly Reported termly
<b>80 % (20% persistent absence)</b>	Early Intervention informed who will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or issue a fixed penalty notice. Each pupil will have an individualised programme of support, worked out in consultation with the home and other relevant professionals

Ladywood School will make use of National Statistics from DfE to analyse attendance data.

The Senior Leadership Team will be informed termly of whole school attendance data (for all children), with reference to the above RAG rating system.

SLT and class teams will be liaise regularly with regards individual children's attendance causing concern. Class teams will be provided with rag rated attendance data termly.

### **PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is

doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and parents' / carers' fullest support and co-operation is required to tackle this. All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents / carers will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through the school management system.

### **SUMMARY**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents / carers and to promote attendance. At Ladywood we do this via parent's evenings and the annual review process.

Equally, parents / carers have a duty to make sure that all pupils attend school. School staff are committed to working with parents / carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. This will enable our learners to know more, do more and be more.

### **Ethnicity & Equal Opportunities**

Our policy is designed to be culturally appropriate and inclusive of all children. We will aim to avoid any form of racism, sexism and stereotyping.

### **Community Links**

The emphasis is upon learning within the home, school and community. Pupils will be given the opportunity to transfer knowledge, skills, attitudes and concepts that they have learnt to other situations. Some pupils are offered time learning in other settings, e.g. mainstream schools, museums, nurseries. Social inclusion is encouraged wherever possible. Opportunities are created for the pupils to develop awareness of other cultures.

### **Partnership with Parents**

Ladywood School values the input of parents and regards the partnership between home and school very highly. We consider the quality of this relationship as an integral part in supporting the children to reach their full potential.

### **Monitoring the Policy**

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and strategies are implemented

### **Dissemination of the Policy**

Head Teacher, Trustees, all staff members and health professionals will receive a copy of this policy. Copies are available in school for parents on request.