ST LEONARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

St. Leonard's CE Primary School encourages everyone to 'Enjoy Success' by embedding our Christian values in hearts and minds, within a nurturing, safe and inclusive environment, equipping our children to become global citizens.

We at St. Leonard's school believe that we are part of God's family, following the example of Jesus Christ, and strive to put into action St. Paul's teaching on the fruit of the Spirit.

"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"

Galatians 5. 22-23

Our vision and Christian values underpin everything we do as a school: our aims and ethos, policies, procedures, the design of our curriculum, how we treat one another, the decisions that we make and the school's management and governance.

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Ratified by the Board of Governors: March 2024

Headteacher	Luke Bridges
Chair of Governors	Rose Patey

Review Date: March 2026

https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a Parent/ Carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. The following legislation defines the importance of regular attendance:

The Law relating to attendance:
Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-
(a) to age, ability and aptitude and
(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have
Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'
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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 us all to focus on this we will help parents by:

- Giving details on attendance weekly in our newsletters
- Reporting yearly on how a child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, external exams, emergencies or situations where through no fault of the family, the child was unable to attend school. The Headteacher will determine whether absences should be authorised or not.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Barnet LA using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents, and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is better not 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 usually makes things worse.

Where the school identifies a pattern of persistent absence, it has a duty under the provisions of section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to have due regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, which may include a referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer .

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ 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 we expect parents’ support and cooperation to tackle this.
We monitor all absence thoroughly (see the section below on tracking and improving attendance). 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 our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.
All PA cases are also automatically made known to the LA Educational Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent Parents/ Carers must:

- Contact us as soon as possible by text message or via our 24hr voicemail service on the first day of absence by 8.45am.

- If a child is absent for a medical reason for more than a week a letter or email from the parents must be supplied with details of medical appointments.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text Parents/ Carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard an explanation for the absence;

- Use a child's 2nd and 3rd contact person's details to make contact with a child's family if the Parent/ Carer is not reachable.

- Arrange a home visit if a child's family is not reached by the end of the school day.

- For all children where contact cannot be made after 24 hours (and after having made a home visit), the school will take further steps to investigate the absence. This may include contacting the relevant authorities or the police.

- Invite a Parent/ Carer in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher if absences persist.

- Refer the matter to the LA Educational Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

- Speak with all pupils who are absent and have a record of persistent absence to see if there is anything that can be done to get the pupil to school.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have Parents/ Carers contact numbers at all times. Parents and Carers should ensure that contact details are updated at the beginning of each school year and as soon as necessary in the event of any changes.

The School Educational Welfare Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and 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 LA Educational Welfare Officer.
They 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, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable.

If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day.

Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.45 am** and we expect your child to be in the playground and ready for the whistle at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.50 am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed.
If your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record, Parents/ Carers will be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to resolve the problem; however, Parents and Carers can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting a child to school on time.

6 unauthorised lates in a 4-week period may result in a fine (fixed penalty notice).

Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Usually holidays during term will not be authorised.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take time off during school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school. A maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a

decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

The circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by school include, but are not limited to:

- When a pupil is just starting at the school. This is very important as a child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS).
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below the persistent absence threshold (Defined as 90%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

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

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and every child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96**%** attendance.

Our target is to achieve better than this 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.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

The Headteacher – Luke Bridges

The Deputy Headteacher – Ruth Spencer

The Office Admin Assistant – Francesca Wood

Tracking and Improving Attendance

Attendance is monitored by the Headteacher in the first week of every month when school is open. Overall attendance and persistent absence is monitored for the whole school, Pupils with SEND, pupils in receipt of the pupil premium fund and any group that is identified as causing concern (EAL, ethnic minority, boys/ girls). This analysis

is looked at by class. The aim of the analysis is to identify trends. Once the data is collated, the following questions are asked:

- Are any groups causing concern?
- Are any individual pupils or families within a group causing concern?
- Is the pattern of attendance improving or deteriorating?
- Are there any factors which have impacted attendance? (Contagious illness? adverse weather? friendship groups?) Can these factors be mitigated?
- What more can the school do to improve attendance?
- Which families need to be contacted by the Headteacher?
- Which pupils should be congratulated? Where are positive patterns of improvement/ achievement?

Attendance is reported to Governors as part of the Termly Headteacher's Report.