



Leigh Academy
Mascalls

Leigh Academy Mascalls Attendance Policy

Document title:	Attendance Policy
Version number:	1.1
Date of Issue	September 2025
Date to be revised	September 2027

Rationale

Leigh Academy Mascalls adheres to the principles and guidance as set out in the DfE publication, "Working together to improve school attendance." August 2024. The Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is Assistant Principal Stephen Jegede

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, your child must be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

It is our duty to strive for 100% attendance for all children consistently. Leigh Academy Mascalls aims to promote at least good attendance (attendance above 97%). Leigh Academy Mascalls recognises and supports the evidence that poor attendance can significantly impact both educational outcomes as well as mental health, wellbeing and social development. Ultimately, the impact of attendance on long-term life chances for our students is maximised through good attendance.

Academy resources support good attendance by creating a safe, calm, inclusive and orderly environment. Our behaviour strategy, learning support, the college team, as well as conflict resolution, provide students with on-site support. Such an environment is the first intervention for the most vulnerable students at risk of poor attendance. Serious mental health and wellbeing must always be referred to a GP and diagnosed professionally. Leigh Academy Mascalls also recognises that attendance to school is mandatory and it is the legal responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure good attendance.

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's Home School Agreement, which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school (statutory).

It is very important, therefore, that you ensure your child attends regularly. This policy sets out how, together, we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents/carers and pupils via the academy website.

Good attendance is important because:

1. Statistics show a direct link between underachievement and absence below 95%
2. Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
3. Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
4. Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
5. Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what parents/carers will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance. To help us all focus on this, we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular Principals update.
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance is.
- Celebrate good attendance through whole school assemblies.
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and outings/ events.

Help and Support?

If you would like help, support and advice regarding your child's punctuality and attendance, please contact your child's college. You can make an appointment by email or by telephoning the main academy number 01892835366

Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities of the academy's attendance lead

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and coordinate the academy's work, alongside an attendance manager, in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the academy.

Responsibilities of students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive at school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the student services desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act), and permitting absence from school that the school does not authorise creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.

- Discuss with the advisor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school in helping their child achieve 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by email if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Understanding types of absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

1. **Authorised absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
2. **Unauthorised absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays,
 - To look after siblings,
 - Truancy before or during the school day,
 - Absences which have not been explained.

An academy can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell, but on return to school, there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered. Penalty notices can be used by all schools where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence:

- Ten unauthorised sessions of absence (including Holiday (G) / Unauthorised Absence (O) / Unauthorised Late (U)) may result in a request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued.
- The penalty notice amount increased from August 2024 with a maximum of two penalty notices within a rolling three-year period:-
- First offence - The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Second Offence (within 3 years) - the second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
- Third Offence and subsequent Offences (within 3 years) - the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.
- Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of

school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21days).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf

Persistent absence

From September 2015 in line with Government Guidelines a pupil will be defined as a “Persistent Absentee” if they miss approximately 10% or more of all possible school sessions, any attendance that is 90% or below.

What is the impact of persistent absence?

There's a clear link between poor attendance at the Academy and low levels of attainment. Poor attendance can disrupt a pupil's own learning and that of other pupils. It has a damaging effect on a child's academic career in the Academy. Every Academy day counts; don't let your child miss out on the education they deserve.

100%	99%	98%	90%	84%	80%	74%
190 School days a year	186 days of education	182 days of education	171 days of education	160 days of education	152 days of education	140 days of education
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0 days off school in a year	4 days off in a school year	8 days off in a school year	19 days off in a school year	30 days off in a school year	38 days off in a school year	50 days off in a school year
			Research suggests that your child would now be failing 1-2 grades below their potential	Your child would have missed 6 weeks of Education	Research suggests that your child would now be failing 2-3 grades below their potential	Your child would have missed 10 weeks of education
Amazing! Your attendance is on track			Concerning You are now classed as 'Persistent Absentee'.		Serious concern The local authority will be moving towards court action	

There are 175 non-school days a year; families should use these days for holidays/trips to see relatives.

What does the law say about poor attendance?

Unauthorised absence from the Academy can be a cause for concern in relation to child welfare and safeguarding. Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a legal duty to secure their child's regular and punctual attendance at school.

The Academy provides ample warning to parents and carers regarding unsatisfactory attendance. However, should a child be persistently absent and if parents and carers are unable to provide valid reasons or proof, the Academy, in conjunction with Kent County Council, will intervene. In this instance, parents and carers could face a fine of from £80 to £2,500 and/or two to three months imprisonment, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. A fine will also be issued if a student is persistently late after a warning letter is sent.

Education for Health Needs Including Mental Health

The Academy will operate according to its statutory duties under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and DFE: Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school (DFE: Education for children with health needs who cannot attend).

The Academy will refer to the Local Authority regarding alternative provision where a student cannot attend school full-time for 15 days or more, consecutive or otherwise, due to a physical or mental health need and cannot access full-time education.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, a school may only remove the name of a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from its roll in specific circumstances, which include where: - the pupil has been certified by a medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school, before ceasing to be of compulsory school age; and - Neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school, after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

Removing a Student from Roll

As per 'The School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024' - Section 9, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from the academy roll due to continued serious absence.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/regulation/9/made>

The pupil has not attended the school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period of leave, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances. If we are unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts, we will remove them from the roll.

The pupil has been continuously absent from the school for at least twenty school days, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances. If we are unable to establish the pupil's whereabouts, we will remove them from the roll.

- We will only enter pupils on the admission register where we have received written confirmation that the person with control of the pupil's attendance has accepted the school place.
- Where the local authority has offered a place at the school but no written confirmation of acceptance has been received from the person with control of the pupil's attendance, we will write to the local authority requesting evidence in writing and will not enter the pupil onto the admission register until this has been received. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the offer of a place will be withdrawn and offered to another pupil in accordance with our Admissions Policy.
- We will enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school.

If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name will be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before, or at the beginning of the first session on that day.

- Where a pupil does not attend on the agreed date, we will send a letter to the person with control of the pupil's attendance asking them to confirm in writing within 10 school days that they wish to take up the place.
- If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the pupil's name will be removed from the admission register and the place offered to another pupil in accordance with the [admission policy](#).

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at Leigh Academy Mascalls at 8.25 am.

Lateness		Code
Arrival between 8.30 am and 9.30 am	• Registers are open. • Pupils who arrive during the registration period with acceptable reasons for lateness are counted as present, but late. • Pupils who arrive after 8.30 without an acceptable reason 3 times in a week are given an after-school detention	L
Arrival after 9.30 am	• Registers are closed. • Pupils who arrive after close of registers with unacceptable reasons, absence is unauthorised. This then counts as one unauthorised session. (10 unauthorised sessions may result in a referral to KCC and a fixed penalty notice). • Pupils who arrive after 9.30 am without an acceptable reason 3 times in a week are given an after school detention	U

Lateness to lesson	- Registers stay open throughout the lesson. - If a student is late, this will be coded as such and with a record of minutes late. - If students are late to lessons, this will be logged on the register. Lates are collated and the appropriate sanction is put in place. Further lateness could result in parent meetings and college intervention	L (+min late)
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Application for leave of absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, as well as the relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. As Principals should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Applications for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Principal of the Academy via our attendance manager, Anika Davies (anika.davies@mascalls.latrust.org.uk). The Academy will also seek proof of any absence approved during term time as evidence for your child's attendance record (this would be supporting documentation).

Home visits

In the event of your child(ren)'s attendance declining, and with no contact, an unannounced home visit will occur. Should there be no contact, a referral will be made via 101, and contact will be made with Kent County Council.

Evidence to support absence

We advise parents to notify us on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. We will authorise or not authorise absences due to illness in line with the DFE Working together to improve attendance guidelines found below. If the pupil has fallen into the persistent absentee category (below 90%) or the authenticity of illness is in doubt, we can request parents to provide evidence to support illness. We can record the absence as unauthorised if we are not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, but we will advise parents of our intention. Evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

Monitoring and intervention

Attendance Monitoring and Intervention Procedures	
Action	Person responsible
Punctuality	
Students are late due to buses Advisors to amend registers as present, not late or absent	Advisor
Late to lesson 1 but not late to advisory. Mark students as late and record the minutes they are late	Attendance team/College
Late to lessons throughout the day. Students to be marked late throughout the day.	College team
Persistent lateness to lessons If over 5 in a week, students will be given an after-school detention. Persistent lateness will mean an inclusion day, and further lateness will lead to a suspension	College team

Attendance		
Unexplained absence will be followed up with a phone call and a text message. Until contact is made, students will remain as N	Attendance manager and college team	
All N codes to be followed up on throughout the day with a text message and a phone call.	Attendance manager	
Student attendance below 96% - Advisor/College team to call home and discuss any issues leading to poor attendance. Any reference made to mental health must be followed up with contact to the college team and parental/carer referral to GP. A letter sent reminding parents of the expectations of regular attendance	Advisor/College team	Through each of these stages, there will be reasonable adjustments where applicable and appropriate

Student attendance 90-94% (if no improvement) An invite posted to attend a meeting with the college team, an Attendance improvement plan of support to be completed. Cover letter and copy of plan posted. No further absences will be authorised for anyone below 90% without correct supporting evidence provided.	Attendance manager/college team	
Student attendance 85-90% (if no improvement) 2nd meeting invite posted, meeting arranged with SLT/ Trust Attendance Advisor to review Attendance Improvement plan. Copy of review posted. Continue to monitor. If no significant improvement in next 2 weeks Warning letter posted -possible local authority referral for a Penalty notice or prosecution.	Attendance manager/Student Support Manager	
Student attendance 85% below (if no improvement) Local authority involvement and either a Penalty notice to be issued or consider prosecution route below:	Attendance manager	
Complete a Non statutory referral to local authority. Meeting to be arranged and held with the local authority /Attendance manager/SLT/College team. Review all avenues of support via the students ongoing Attendance Improvement plan. Letter posted confirming all from the meeting.		
Students attendance continues to decline after 1st stage of local authority intervention: Statutory referral to be completed to local authority for consideration of prosecution. Case handed over to local authority to lead and school to continue to monitor and safeguard.	Attendance manager	

There are key policies that are relevant to pupil attendance, registration procedures, and following up on pupil absence, which, for your convenience, are listed below:

Admissions Anti-bullying

Child protection and safeguarding Suspension

Special educational needs, Teaching and learning, Behaviour and rewards

Appendix 1

Registration Codes (includes new)

/ Present (AM) \ Present (PM)

B Educated off site (NOT at an alternative provision)

C Other Authorised Circumstances

C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad

C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

D Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)

E Excluded (no alternative provision made)

G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)

J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority (section 19)

L Late (before registers closed)

M Medical/Dental appointments

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)

P Approved sporting activity

Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements (travel pass delays via local authority)

R Religious observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

U Late (after registers closed) V Educational visit or trip

W Work experience

X Non-compulsory school age absence

Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause (emergency situations only)

Z Student not yet on roll

School closed to students