



LISAL

LANCASTER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
FOR **ALTERNATIVE LEARNING**

Attendance Policy

Version date: Spring Term 2025

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LISALAP/012/2018 V4.0



Attendance Policy

This policy is written in accordance with the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations, and the latest Department for Education (DfE) guidance, particularly the following DfE publications:

- **Working together to improve school attendance** (DfE, August 2024)
- **Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs** (May 2013) - [gov.uk/illness-child-education](https://www.gov.uk/illness-child-education)

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is a legal requirement for all pupils of school age (i.e. attending school in the year they turn five). Pupils must attend school regularly to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided. LISAL is committed to ensuring that all pupils attend regularly and on time, maximizing their access to learning.

This policy applies to all children registered at the school. It is made available to parents during the admissions process and is also accessible on the school website for all parents/carers. Paper copies are available on request.

Although parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's attendance, the school community, including the College of Teachers, works collaboratively to support pupils in developing good attendance habits. Procedures outlined in this policy ensure effective attendance management.

Children who are frequently late or absent from school are at risk of falling behind in their learning. Persistent absence can create significant learning gaps, which negatively impacts their progress. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will miss two full terms of learning over the course of their primary education.

Aims and Objectives

This policy ensures that all staff and trustees understand and are clear about the actions required to promote good attendance. Through this policy, we aim to:

- **Improve pupils' achievement** by promoting high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- **Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance** for all pupils, except those with chronic health conditions.
- Create an ethos where **good attendance and punctuality are the norm**, valued by the school community.
- Raise awareness among parents, carers, and pupils about the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality throughout a child's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, and staff to ensure every pupil reaches their potential, free from the barriers of unnecessary absence.



- **Promote a positive and welcoming school atmosphere** where pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, fostering a sense of responsibility for their own attendance.
- Establish consistent and effective monitoring of attendance, ensuring achievement is recognized and issues are addressed in a timely manner.
- **Recognize the role of all staff, especially class teachers**, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance issues among staff, parents, and pupils.
- Ensuring parents understand their responsibility for regular, punctual school attendance.
- Equipping children with the life skills to take responsibility for their attendance in an age-appropriate way.
- Communicating effectively with all stakeholders regarding school attendance matters.
- Developing procedures for identifying, reporting, and addressing poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils facing difficulties that prevent regular attendance.
- Following up on any non-attendance in a timely manner.

Definitions

Authorised Absence

An absence is authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason, and the school receives notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child is ill and the parent informs the school. Only the school can authorise an absence, not parents.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away from school without valid reason, even if the parent supports the absence.

Procedures

Our school will follow these procedures to promote good attendance:

- Maintain appropriate registration processes.
- Report attendance data to the governing body termly.
- Communicate attendance expectations clearly to staff, parents, and pupils.
- Keep consistent daily records of attendance and lateness.
- Follow up absences if parents have not communicated with the school.
- Ensure parents understand what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Discourage unnecessary absences, such as holidays during term time.
- Collaborate with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance.
- Refer any cases of concerning attendance to the School Attendance Service if necessary.
- All staff must report any attendance or punctuality concerns to the College of Teachers.



Responsibilities

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Monitoring class attendance and identifying any patterns of poor attendance or unusual explanations.
- Reporting attendance concerns to the College of Teachers and acting on any actions.
- Emphasizing the importance of good attendance to their class.
- Following up on absences and noting explanations within the register.
- Contacting parents where necessary to discuss attendance issues.

The College of Teachers is responsible for:

- Monitoring overall school attendance trends.
- Addressing concerns regarding individual attendance.
- Providing reports and liaising with external professionals to address the causes of persistent absence.

Administration Staff are responsible for:

- Recording attendance data.
- Taking calls or messages from parents about absences.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Keeping records of pupils who arrive late or leave early.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time unless illness or medical appointments prevent it.
- Contacting the school office on the first day of absence.
- Informing the school of any medical appointments in advance and providing supporting documentation (e.g., appointment cards).
- Requesting authorised absence for term-time holidays only in exceptional circumstances.
- Communicating promptly about any concerns or reluctance their child may have about attending school.

Registration

The school gates open at 8.45 am. The bell rings at 8.55 am. The register is taken at 9:00 am and remains open until 9:15 am. Pupils arriving after 9:00 am must enter via the school office and will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after 9:30 am will be marked with a "U" (unauthorised absence). A record of late arrivals must be kept in the Late Book and signed by the parent/guardian.



Lateness

Persistent lateness will result in parents being contacted and offered support to address any underlying issues, such as health concerns, Special Educational Needs (SEND), or transportation difficulties. If lateness continues, the school may involve the School Attendance Service.

Absences

Parents should inform the school on the first day of their child's absence and provide details of the reason for absence. The school requires notification of absences due to illness either in person, by phone, or by email. All absences must be reported daily, even in the case of long-term illness.

First Day Contact

If a pupil is absent and no contact has been made, the school will contact parents to ascertain the reason for absence. If the parent or emergency contacts cannot be reached, the school will follow safeguarding procedures, including contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Illness

For prolonged illness (15 days or more), the school will work with the Local Authority to arrange suitable education, whether at home or in a hospital setting. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence for repeated illness-related absences.

Parental Requests for Term-Time Holidays

Parents can request absence for holidays in special circumstances (e.g., significant family events) by submitting a written request to the class teacher. This request will be reviewed by the College of Teachers. If the absence is deemed detrimental to the child's education, it may be refused.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects at least 95% attendance. If a child's attendance falls below this threshold, the school will initially communicate concerns to parents and offer support to improve attendance. If no improvement is seen, the School Attendance Service may be consulted.



Request for authorised absence during term time for children of statutory school age.

Once children reach statutory school age, at the age of 5, legal requirements govern attendance. Family holidays should be avoided during term time. The school can only approve absence for family holidays if it considers that there are **special reasons** that warrant the holiday. We are sympathetic to individual circumstances and understand that this is not always possible. Please note that we will take into account the child’s general attendance when considering requests for term time holiday leave.

Up to 10 days per academic year may be authorised, although there is **no** parental entitlement to holiday leave of absence. The school can only approve absence for family holidays if it considers that there are special reasons that warrant the holiday. Please note that holiday prices and the fact that parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school are not classed as special reasons.

Before the school is asked to authorise a holiday, we would like to encourage you to think about how your child’s absence would affect his/her progress, and how their absence will affect the class as a whole.

The school should be consulted **prior** to booking.

NAMES OF CHILDREN	CLASS

DATES REQUESTED

FROM	TO

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS

[COVID compliant risk assessment]

Please state which country you are travelling to/through and date of return to the UK.

PLEASE SAY WHY THIS ABSENCE IS IN TERM TIME

SIGNED		PRINT NAME	
		DATE	/ /

[COVID compliant risk assessment]:

date child can return to school (after 14 day isolation period) -----

WE DO/DO NOT AUTHORISE THE REQUEST

REASONS FOR DECISION:	SIGNATURE (COLLEGE OF TEACHERS):				
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY					
PARENT NOTIFIED	TEACHER NOTIFIED				
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