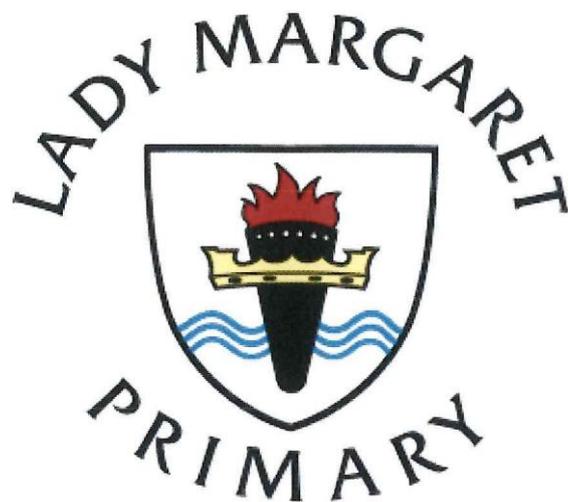


Lady Margaret Primary School



Where children come FIRST

Attendance Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Body **Date:** September 2020

Last reviewed on: August 2020

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This policy supports the **Rights Respecting principles** adopted by Lady Margaret Primary School and is particular relevant to the following articles:

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.

Article 11

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally or being prevented from returning.

Article 28

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free. Secondary education must be available for every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled, helping them attain their full potential both academically and socially.
- Promoting a maximum attendance and good timekeeping for all children
- Maintaining a low rate of persistent absence.

- Maintaining parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of efficient and full time attendance.

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Good attendance is important because:

Statistics show a direct link between poor attendance and under-achievement. At Lady Margaret Primary School a regular attender attends **every day**.

Regular attenders;

- make better progress, both socially and academically,
- find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with,
- find learning more satisfying and settle into high school more easily.
- Encourages responsible learning habits and prepares children for higher education and for their working life.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8:50** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8:55** and will be kept open until **9:00**. The register for the second session will be taken at **13:20** and will be kept open until **13:25**.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by **9:30** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers must notify the school by telephoning **0208 566 6486** to speak to an administrator or leave a message on the answer machine.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill, there should be a symptom, feeling unwell is not enough. **Remember we may ask for medical verification where illness-absence is frequent or prolonged**

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Where absence is frequent or prolonged the absence will be recorded as unauthorised until medical verification is received.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Parents/carers must provide the school office with a copy of the appointment card/letter at least 48 hours prior to the appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Where attendance monitoring identifies concerns regarding a child's punctuality the following process is followed.

Stage 1 - Where a child has been late more than five times in the previous half term a reminder letter is sent to the parent/carer advising them that their child's punctuality must improve and that text messages will be sent if their child is late again. (Appendix 2).

Stage 2- Where a child's punctuality shows no improvement, the parent/carer will be invited to meet with the **assistant headteacher** who will set a target for improvement. At this stage the parents/carers will be advised that they will be referred to Ealing school attendance service if targets aren't met.

Stage 3 – Where a child's punctuality target is not met the parents/carers will be referred to Ealing school attendance service.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Where a child is marked absent and no reason has been provided the attendance officer will:

- Check that the child has not arrived late.
- Contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason.
- If parent/carer cannot be contacted notify the headteacher and safeguarding lead.
- Contact Local Authority (LA) School Attendance Officer if the child has already been referred to the local authority.

As part of the school's safeguarding procedures, if a child has not attended, without any parental contact or any other satisfactory information for the absence, then by the third day of unexplained absence the school will follow the "Reasonable Enquiry" process. This is carried out in collaboration with Ealing Council's School Attendance Officer to identify the pupil's whereabouts. The pupil will remain on roll during this process and parents will be contacted at their last known address to advise that their child's school place is at risk.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school reports to parents/carers on their child's attendance record annually in the written end-of-year report, unless there are concerns regarding their child's attendance, in these circumstances the school will provide a report at parents' evenings which are held once a term.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence **must** fill in an application form in advance.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as the bereavement of an immediate family member, this being the parent grandparent or sibling of the child. Whilst these requests will be dealt with sensitively the expectation is that the pupil should be out of school for a maximum of **three days** and that the parent/carer provides appropriate evidence. Any additional time will be marked as unauthorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

There is no entitlement to time off during term time. If children are absent for reasons, which are not permitted by law, or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Term time holidays.
- **Absence following or prior to a school closure or authorised leave (this will be coded as unauthorised holiday until satisfactory medical evidence has been provided).**
- Waiting for a delivery or repair
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is a child's birthday
- Parent/carer's illness (**other than in an emergency**)

- Frequent unsubstantiated claims of illness
- Where there is no explanation for an absence **or the school considers the reason given for the absence as unsatisfactory.**

If a child goes abroad during a school holiday period, the parent must make definite arrangements so that they return in good time for school re-opening. Absence claimed for unexpected delays will require documentary evidence together with proof of original return dates. For example where illness prevents travel a doctor's certificates must be provided (these should be in English) and must be accompanied by a travel ticket with dates that would have indicated a timely return.

If a child remains abroad at the beginning of a school term and absence extended parents will be advised that their child's school place may be at risk.

The present **Prevent legislation** makes it a legal duty for the Headteacher to report any child who is absent from school who the school believes may be involved in matters concerning radicalisation or extremism.

The present **FGM legislation** also makes it a legal duty for the school to report any child who they believe may be subject to FGM. These must be reported immediately to the appropriate agencies including the police.

Through regular monitoring the school identifies pupils and families where attendance is poor. The following process is followed where there are concerns. (See Appendix 4)

Stage 1 – As soon as a child's attendance falls below 96% a reminder letter is sent to the parent advising them that their child's attendance must improve and that their attendance will be closely monitored.

Stage 2- Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, the parent will be invited to attend a meeting with the **assistant headteacher** who will set a target for improvement. At this stage the parents will be advised that they will be referred to the **Local Authority (LA) School Attendance Officer** if targets aren't met.

Stage 3 – Where a child's attendance target is not met the parents/carers will be referred to the **Local Authority (LA) School Attendance Officer**.

4.3 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. **Penalties may be issued to each parent for each child.**

If issued with a penalty notice, parents/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent/carer in the magistrate's court for irregular attendance, where, on conviction a fine of up to £1000 may be imposed as well as a record of criminal conviction.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school works with parents/carers and pupils to support regular attendance by:

- Acknowledging and rewarding good attendance and punctuality through achievement assemblies.
- Acknowledging positive improvements.
- Communicating early with parents/carers about issues with their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Inviting parents of children at risk of becoming persistent absentees to attendance workshops.
- Reminding children about the importance of attending regularly through weekly attendance cup presented in assembly and attendance board updates.
- Reminding parents/carers of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in school letters, the school prospectus, the school website, open evenings and pupil annual reports.
- Following up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as necessary.
- Publishing a child's attendance rate with her/his annual school report

6. Attendance monitoring

The school business manager and **assistant headteacher** monitor overall pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above **3** days in any half term we will contact the parents/carers to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the local authority school attendance officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a **persistent absentee**.

When a pupil's attendance falls below 90% we will invite the parent/carer to attend a meeting with the **assistant headteacher**.

If following the meeting with the **assistant headteacher** the pupil's absence continues to rise, a referral will be made to the local authority school attendance officer.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school collects and stores attendance data using an electronic management information system and is used for internal purposes to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a

cause for concern, and to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The school business manager

The school business manager:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for accurately recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office/reception staff

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher/school business manager. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

Appendix 2: punctuality letter

Parent/Carer of *child's name*

Class:

Subject: **Punctuality**

dd/mm/yyyy

Dear Parent/Carer,

The school places great importance upon punctuality as it is a positive habit that should be formed as early as possible.

Unfortunately *child's name* arrived late to school **x times** last term causing disruption to their lessons, and to their classmates' learning which is an unacceptable way to start the day.

We will now be monitoring your child's punctuality closely and you will be sent a text message if your child is late. If your child's lateness persists the school will arrange to meet you more formally and, in some cases, this may involve a referral to the **Ealing school attendance service**

I would like to remind you that the school is open from 8:30 every day and that the playground is supervised from this time. I very much hope you will support us by ensuring your child arrives at school before 8:40 for soft start so that they are ready to learn when lessons start at 8:50 every day.

If your child attended a medical appointment or an arrangement regarding late arrival was previously agreed with the school, causing a late arrival, please ignore this letter.

Thank you for supporting the school and your child's learning.

Yours sincerely



Helen Rai

Head Teacher

Appendix 3: attendance letters

Parent/carer of *child's name*

Class:

Subject: **Attendance**

dd/mm/yyyy

Dear Parent/Carer,

On reviewing our attendance data it has come to our attention that *child's name's* attendance is currently at **xx %**. The expected rate of attendance for all pupils is **96%**, unless there is an ongoing medical problem supported by medical evidence. If this is the case, **please provide us with copies of any relevant documentation such as hospital letters, prescriptions, appointment cards or any medication your child has been given. Without this proof we will be unable to authorise your child's absence.**

Your child **must** attend school every day in order to maintain the appropriate progress in their learning and to build on the previous days understanding. As you can appreciate the teacher is unable to recap on the previous work in any depth as this will be too time consuming and the remainder of the class is then unable to progress in their learning.

I shall be monitoring your child's attendance closely in the coming weeks and if there is not a significant improvement I will be inviting you to attend a meeting with the **assistant headteacher.**

Yours sincerely,



Mrs H Rai
Headteacher

Parent/carer of *child's name*

Class:

Subject: **Persistent Absence**

dd/mm/yyyy

Dear Parent/Carer,

On reviewing our attendance data it has come to our attention that *child's name's* attendance is currently at xxx%. The expected rate of attendance for all pupils is **96%**, unless there is an ongoing medical problem supported by medical evidence. Attendance of below **90%** is classed as persistent absence and action can be taken by **Ealing school attendance service** if attendance doesn't improve.

To ensure you are not referred to the **Local Authority (LA) School Attendance Officer** *child's name* needs to attend school every day. I will continue to monitor your child's attendance closely in the coming weeks and you will be required to attend a meeting with the **assistant head teacher** if there is not a significant improvement.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs H Rai
Headteacher

Appendix 4: Attendance monitoring flowchart

