



Absence, Attendance and Registration Policy

Introduction

Leighton Park School believes that for students to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the school, they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality. Poor attendance can also have a negative effect on personal and social development amongst students. A child missing from school is a safeguarding and welfare concern as it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or may indicate that a student is at serious risk of harm.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to provide a clear, consistent framework which confirms to statutory requirements and promotes high levels of attendance and punctuality of students, as well as outlining clear procedures for identifying and addressing situations where students fail to attend regularly, punctually or go missing. Statutory framework

- School attendance: DfE advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (July 2019)
- Guidance published by the ISI forming parts of the Independent Schools statutory regulations (ISSRs)
- Keeping Children Safe In Education (2019)

Staff should refer to the Registration manual for further guidance on our procedures.

Absence, Attendance and Registration is overseen by the Assistant Head, (Pastoral and Safeguarding), with day-to-day procedures covered by Housemaster/Housemistress (HMs), Tutors and the School Office.

Attendance expectations

Absence from school is a contributing factor in low student achievement. Whilst individual circumstances maybe considered as special cases, 95% attendance and above is considered a standard that all children should achieve.

97% and above: Excellent

95% – 97%: Good

90% – 95%: Fair

Below 90%: Worrying. Action required by the school and the LA or Children's Social Care may need to be informed, depending on the individual circumstances for the poor attendance.

Responsibilities of Parents

At Leighton Park we see education as a partnership between the student, family and the School. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for our students and we look to parents to support this objective. Parents (which also refers to Guardians), with a child of compulsory age, have a legal duty to make sure their child receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability (and to any special education needs they may have). Compulsory school age lasts from the term after a child's fifth birthday until their eighteenth birthday.

1. All students are required to be in school by 8.15 am. Day students should not be dropped off before 7.30 am. The formal school day ends at 4.15 pm or after co-curricular commitments and for many will finish when school transport departs at 6.05 pm (or 5.00 pm on Fridays).

2. Parents are responsible for informing the school on any occasion when their child is unable to attend school, providing the reason for non-attendance. This should be done as far as possible in advance and by the very latest by 8.00 am on each morning of the absence. The student's tutor should be emailed and copied to SchoolOffice@leightonpark.com

3. Parents wishing to take their child out of School for an appointment, such as a medical appointment, which is less than half a day, should write to or email their child's Housemaster and tutor copying in the SchoolOffice@leightonpark.com Parents should expect a reply from their child's tutor regarding such a request.

The student must then sign out at Old School reception where a check will be made. The student will be recorded as absent from school and should then sign in on their return at reception.

4. In exceptional circumstances, (such as attending a funeral or wedding, religious observance, elective surgery, or involvement in a regional or national extracurricular competition) which requires absence of longer than half a day, the parent must seek authorisation for the absence from the school by writing or emailing the Head of Section in advance of the proposed date(s) of absence. The Head of Section will confirm whether the circumstances meet the definition of 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence may be granted by the school. They will email a response and copy in the School Office and the Housemaster/mistress. For the avoidance of doubt, early departure or late arrival for flights home or for holiday, do not constitute acceptable grounds for authorising absence and such requests will not be granted. Term dates are published on the website a year in advance.

5. When parents/guardians are to be away from home overnight during term, they are required as part of their contract with the school, to inform the school of the name and contact number of a temporary guardian. This information should be provided to the Housemaster/mistress and should be copied to the relevant Head of Section.

6. Where a Leighton Park student's attendance falls below 90% over a term period, parents may be required to attend a meeting with school to outline the reasons for this and to ensure attendance improvement.

Responsibilities of the Students

Students have a responsibility to attend school when they are fit and well and to arrive at school in time for morning registration at 8.15 am each day during term time. Please note this is not before 7.30 am in the morning. Students must also attend afternoon registration each day at 2.20 pm. If, for any reason, a student needs to leave the School site during the School day, he/she must seek and receive permission from his/her Housemaster / Mistress, or when ill, the School Nurse.

Failure to attend school regularly or punctually or failing to attend registration without good reason or leaving school without permission constitute breaches of the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policy and may lead to formal disciplinary action being taken.

Students are not normally allowed to leave the site during the school day unless accompanied by a member of staff, or a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture, the dates of which are published in the Calendar or will have been notified to you in advance. Sixth formers are allowed to leave school for driving lessons provided that they sign in and out and have their Housemaster/mistress' permission, in accordance with the school's procedure on driving lessons.

Responsibilities of the School

Teachers take and maintain an accurate School Attendance Register of all students formally twice each day throughout term time: once at 8.15 am and once at the start of lesson 5, 2.20 pm. Lesson attendance is recorded for every lesson.

Parents of students who have not arrived at school by the time the register closes and for whom no reason for absence has been given to school, will be contacted by school staff to ascertain the student's whereabouts.

The school will inform the LA and/or Children's Social Care (CSC) as appropriate, immediately, if:

- A single absence raises child protection concerns (see the Missing Student Policy and the Child Protection, Safeguarding and Welfare Policy)
- A child has 10 days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence)
- A child of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, the School will report the circumstances, as soon as possible after the grounds for deletion are met, to the LA in which the student lives and in any event before the student's name is deleted from the register.

Boarders (Full, Weekly and Flexi)

The Boarding House is at the centre of a student's life at school. All students are cared for by a Housemaster/mistress and a team consisting of Matrons and House Tutors. Together, they will be responsible for students during term time, including ensuring that he/she is safely occupied outside normal school hours.

The School expects students to 'sign out' when they leave their House and 'sign in' on return outside of the formal teaching hours, 8.15 am to 4.15 pm. This is to ensure that we always know the whereabouts of every student, when leaving the school site.

The School expects students to live with Parents or his/her guardian when he/she is away from school during the week as well as half term during term time. Parents must give authority to the student's Housemaster/ mistress before he/she leaves the school to stay with another family.

Parents must telephone the school if the student is taken ill during a holiday and will not be returning on time. We will always telephone the home if a student is more than three hours late in returning from a holiday or a period of sanctioned leave.

The term dates are published a year in advance in to allow booking of flights without disrupting student's education. We therefore expect students to arrive punctually on the first day of term, and not to leave school before the end of term. It is important that Parents / Guardians let the Housemaster know the exact time that flights will be arriving in the UK each time a student returns to school after a long leave break, or at the start of a new term.

Possible outcomes of poor attendance

Parents are committing an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school or otherwise. Prosecution could result in a fine of up to £2,500, a jail sentence of up to three months or a community sentence. Alternatively, Local Authority Education Welfare Officers, Police Officers and Headmasters have the authority to issue penalty notices to parents of between £50 and £100. Where parents need support to prevent their child from truanting or habitually arriving late we will do our utmost to help. Where parents fail to ensure regular attendance or do not engage with support, a parenting order may be requested by the Local Authority or imposed by Magistrates. This is not a voluntary agreement and requires parents attend parenting classes for a maximum period of up to 12 weeks. The order may be given for a period of up to 12 months and would require parents to have regular contact with a supervising officer – usually the Education Welfare Officer.

Statutory Advice

All Independent schools - Regulation 3(17) "The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006".

For Boarding Schools – NMS 15.5: "Staff know the whereabouts of boarders (or know how to find their whereabouts) in their charge at all times". NMS 15.6: "Staff working within the school know and implement the school's policy in relation to children going missing and their role in implementing that policy. Staff actively search for children who are missing, including working with the police where appropriate".

Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers, an Admissions register, known as the “School Roll”, and an Attendance register. School Inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

The Regulations covering school admission and attendance are very prescriptive reflecting the importance that successive Governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and during the afternoon for all day students. The Regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained.

Boarding students are covered by the Boarding Standards: National Minimum Standards. Standard 15 places a legal requirement upon staff who have boarders in their charge to know their whereabouts at all times (or to know how to find their whereabouts), e.g. by operating a signing in and signing out system when boarders leave the school, and by registering attendance in the boarding house.

The School Register

- A student’s name must be included in the register from the beginning of the first day on which the student is to attend Leighton Park.
- The register is to be completed at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session.
- The register must show whether the student is:
 - i. present;
 - ii. absent;
 - iii. attending an approved educational activity outside school (approved by the school and supervised by a person also approved by the school including work experience or sporting activity);
 - iv. unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (unavoidable closure of the School site or part of it; unavailability of transport provided by the school, or local authority, where the home is not within walking distance);
 - v. taking authorised absence (granted leave of absence by the School; unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause; observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs);
 - vi. taking unauthorised absence (if no reason is established when the register is taken; the entry may be corrected later when the reason is established).

A student must not be marked present at the point registration occurs unless he/she is physically present.

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