Ladygrove Primary School and Nursery Attendance Policy

‘Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school’s ethos and culture.’

Taken from Working together to improve school attendance August 2024.

Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance:
Mrs Jo Weichlbauer

Attendance Team:
Mrs Laura Edenborough Child and Family Support Worker/EWO
Miss Kerry Piper (Pastoral and Well-being Lead)
Mrs Kerrie Jones (Administrator)

All staff are responsible for attendance.

To be reviewed September 2026

Philosophy

Ladygrove Primary School and Nursery is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible. Our Pastoral Team and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) play a significant role in supporting parents and children in getting to school on time every day.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils.

We work from the guidance in Working together to improve school attendance to promote good attendance for all.

As a school we use the Department for Education classifications of Persistent and Severe Absenteeism. Persistent absenteeism is used to describe pupils who are absent for 10% or more of their time at school. This equates to missing a day from school every fortnight or an afternoon or a morning session every week. Severe absenteeism is used to describe an absence rate of 50%.

Our school gives a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we investigate, identify, and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems, as quickly and efficiently as possible. We adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Times of School Registration

8.35 a.m. Classroom doors open

8.45 a.m. Morning Registration

If your child arrives at school later than 8:45 they will be marked as late if it is after 9:20 a.m. they will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

1.00 p.m. Afternoon Registration

Times of Nursery Registration

8.30 a.m. Morning Nursery registration

12.30 p.m. Afternoon Nursery registration

Principles

The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session.
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence.
- display attendance rates around the school and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.
- consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the whole-school attendance policy.
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors.
- Every three weeks Miss Barton our EWO (Education Welfare Officer) meets with our specified attendance team to review attendance, issues attendance concern letters and arranges meetings with parent/carers to discuss attendance. Miss Barton also reviews attendance weekly to analyse attendance and absence data, to identify pupils or year groups that require support with improving their attendance and monitoring the impact of intervention and strategies put in place.
- work with parents and carers to build strong relationships, so they feel that they are listened to and gain understanding of the barriers faced by children who aren't attending school regularly. This allows us to work with families to success remove those barriers.
- The Child & Family support worker/EWO and the Pastoral and Wellbeing lead and the Pupil work with parents within the home and offer support through Early Help assessments.
- send regular newsletters to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues, additionally update school website/Facebook with any attendance related issues.
- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed.
- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.
- work with other partners e.g. the local authority, local schools, when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Procedures

- We expect parents and carers to email: ladygrove.absence@taw.org.uk or call the school on 01952 388370, if a child is going to be absent from school before 8.45 a.m.

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence, we will:

- Follow 'First day contact' procedures and contacts the parent by text message. This message is sent at approximately 9.30 and asks parents to contact school to inform school of the reason for the absence.

- If no contact is made following the initial text message, a second message will be sent between 10am - 11am. This message informs parents to contact school as if not a home visit will be carried out.

- A home visit will be undertaken by a member of the school's pastoral team if no contact has been made with parents. We may also make a home visit after contact if we feel it is necessary.

- If on visiting the family home no one is present, we will leave an attendance card asking them to contact school with the date and times on. This will be done for the next 3 days if we are unable to make contact.

- If after 3 days (or sooner if the school has Safeguarding concerns), school will consider a referral to the *'Children & Family Locality Services'* or contact '*Family Connect',* (T&W Policy is 5 days but as a school we believe it is necessary to make authority aware sooner).

Extended Absence:

- If a child is absent for 10 school days (20 sessions), school will initiate the Missing Child in Education Protocol as advised by Telford and Wrekin Council.

Absence causing concern:

- Where children have persistent absence or attendance is causing a concern, our pastoral team will meet with parents/carers to work out what the barriers to nonattendance are. An Attendance Support plan (ASP) will then be put into place. This plan focuses on support for the family and may offer funded breakfast club and after-school club. Sometimes staff will collect children and bring them to school for short periods of time to support children and their families.

- When support from the pastoral team does not lead to improvements in attendance, we will begin to work in a more formal way with our Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be used to record concerns regarding your child's attendance.

- 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) will be held when attendance continues to cause concern. This meeting will include a senior member of staff, parent, member from the pastoral team and our Education Welfare Officer. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

- At the point at which all avenues of support to encourage good school attendance, our EWO in conjunction with the Local Authority may instigate proceeding to protect the child's right to education. This is always used as a last resort. This can result in fines and/or a community order or imprisonment.

- Where persistent absence continues and/or becomes severe absenteeism, we will follow our school Child Safeguarding processes. This is because severe absenteeism can be classified as neglect and may result in a referral being made to social care via Family Connect.

- Help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

Modified Timetables

Modified timetables may be used by school in exceptional circumstances, e.g. to support a child with a medical need. These must be used for the shortest time necessary and must not be treated as a long-term strategy. Any child placed on a modified timetable must have the necessary paperwork completed and sent to the local authority.

Inclusion:

We aim to promote opportunity and equality for every child and **ALL** children have equal access to school. We want to protect our children and families from any form of discrimination linked with the Protected characteristics.
https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights

We recognise that children and their families who are covered under the equalities act, may have additional barriers to school attendance. We aim to support all our children and their families to improve school attendance.

We also recognise that children with SEND or those with medical conditions may have absence rates which are higher than their peers, we however have high standards of attendance for all our pupils and will work with parents/ carers to overcome barriers.

Performance

It is important to set realistic targets for both attendance and persistent absence; these targets will be set during the Autumn term of each academic year, in consultation with the governing body. The governing body must approve the school target for attendance to be set for the following academic year. The target should be sent to the Group Manager, Admissions, Attendance and School Organisation by the end of the Autumn term at the latest. In compiling an Action Plan, the school will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

In the academic year 2023-2024, our attendance was consistently above national averages.
Our attendance target for 2024-2025 is 96.5%.

When evaluating success, the school will consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved for all groups of children (including PPG and SEND)
- Persistent absence has reduced for all groups of children (including PPG and SEND)
- Punctuality has improved for all groups of children (including PPG and SEND)
- Parental response to absences has improved for all groups of children (including PPG and SEND)
- Re-integration plans have been successful
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Liaising closely with the school's EWO
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages
- A signed copy of any correspondence is retained by the school
- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention

Supporting Pupils and families following absence

- We will welcome your child back in a supportive manner to ensure they feel inclusive
- We will organise for them to catch up on any work that they have missed
- School will support your child and your family with any issues around attendance
- Inclusion and Wellbeing manager will work with parents/carers to make referrals to school nurse team or any other agencies who can support with medical issues
- ELSA (Emotional, Literacy, Support Assistant) work within school to support children with issues around emotional wellbeing, attendance, friendship, and bereavement.
- Support is also available for parents through our Pastoral and Wellbeing lead and our Child & Family Support Worker/EWO, with illness, home issues, relationship issues and bereavement

Leave of absence within term-time

There is a legal responsibility on parents/carers to ensure good school attendance. Children attend school regularly and on time have better educational outcomes than children with poor attendance, therefore requests for leave of absence during term time will only be approved in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually, taking into account the nature of the request and circumstances. It is therefore extremely unlikely that family holidays will meet this criterion. We therefore expect parents to book holidays during school breaks. A leave of absence request will be responded to within 7 school days.

- **Any leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher's discretion'. If the leave of absence is unauthorised the regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval.**

Should the School decide **not to grant the leave,** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with both the Department for Education and Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within 10 school rolling weeks may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine of £160 payable per parent, per child, which can be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days, but only if it is the first Penalty Notice issued to you from 1st September 2024. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to Court proceedings which could ultimately result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2500 and/or an alternative sentence which can include up to three months imprisonment.

If this absence results in a second Penalty Notice issued to you within three years of the date of the first one, (from 1st September 2024) a flat rate of £160 will apply. A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period. Therefore, alternative action or legal measures will be utilised when the criteria of 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10-school week rolling period are met.

Medical Appointments

We may ask for proof of medical appointments to ensure our register codes are compliant with government codes.

Changes

From August 19th 2024 the Government have introduced a new 'national framework for Penalty Notices'. (in Telford & Wrekin the changes apply from 1st September 2024).
There are significant changes that parents need to be aware of:

- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive.
- Penalty Notices are increasing to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.
- Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160
- A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, - alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.
- In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on school's website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

'Parents should always apply to the Headteacher for any request for leave in term time by completing a request form available from school. (DfE guidance states schools should not authorise leave retrospectively so any leave in term time taken without a request being submitted will be unauthorised absence)'. In developing and publishing the new national framework, the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors and Headteacher of this school support this and students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. The DfE Guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance (Feb

2024) states that: Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. (Paragraph 38.)

Each application for leave in term time will be considered and if it is agreed and authorised the Headteacher will determine the duration of any leave. However, if the application is not agreed and the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised. Parents will be notified of any decision in writing. This notification may be hand delivered directly to the parent or posted to the parents' home address.

As a school we are asked to inform you that in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, if your child is absent for 10 school sessions within a 10-week rolling period and that absence is unauthorised, you may be subject to a Penalty Notice fine, criteria is as detailed above.

Ofsted statutory guidance

- Ofsted guidance makes it clear that 'grey exclusions' are illegal. "Where a pupil is sent home for disciplinary reasons for a part of the school lunchtimes, fixed term exclusion is the only legal method of removal'.
- Informal or unofficial exclusions are illegal, regardless of whether they are carried out with the agreement of parent or carers'.

How we promote good school attendance

- We reward good attendance in school with the children. We have two attendance mascots, Lucky Pup and Buddy Bear, who visit the classes in EYFS/ Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 with the highest attendance each week. The winning classes also receive class Dojos. Attendance is shared on the school newsletter, website and Facebook.

- We hold a Focused Attendance week every half-term. The winning classes from EYFS/Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 will receive "Wallace Time" and class Dojos.

- Children with 100% attendance are celebrated termly and annually. Our 'Attend School Every Day' challenge is to celebrate their effort, and students will receive a certificate and be entered into a prize draw for an exciting reward. Pin badges are also awarded to pupils who have attended school for the full academic year.

- At Ladygrove we also celebrate 'Excellent Attendance' termly and annually. This is when a child's attendance is 95% or above. We will communicate this via SMS or email and your child will be entered into a prize draw for an exciting reward

- We have an attendance cup for those children in Year 6 who have never missed a day of school while attending Ladygrove.

- Most improved attendance is also recognised each term and awards given according.

- Although we recognise that school attendance is not compulsory under the age of five, at Ladygrove we value the benefits of all children attending school to set up good routines and to understand the importance of being in school.

Appendix 1


PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS CHANGING
1
FIRST OFFENCE
The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
2
SECOND OFFENCE (WITHIN 3 YEARS)
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:
£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered.
The following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.
3
THIRD OFFENCE AND ANY FURTHER OFFENCES (WITHIN 3 YEARS)
The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates; fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.
Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a Parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education'.
10 SESSIONS (5 DAYS) OF UNAUTHOURISED ABSENCE IN A 10-WEEK PERIOD
Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthourised absence in a 10-week period.
Please follow the link for the Publication that will start from 19th August 2024.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance

Appendix 2 – Request for leave

Request for Leave during Term Time

Date…….....

To: The Headteacher of:……..……(School)

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

(full name) ....

from (date) ..…….…..… to (date) ……..... for …….. school days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) ……..… and (parent/carer)….……

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

(Please remember to provide your holiday booking confirmation or any other supporting documentation. If none is provided you may be asked why) (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s) ……. School(s) .....…….....

……
…….....

.....
…….....

Name of 1st Parent/Carer(s) …… Signed …….....

Current address……
…….

Mobile No:……..

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) …….. Signed ….....

Current address……
……

Mobile No:……..

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time from the Headteacher.

For Office Use Only

Date request for leave in term time received by school ……

Current Attendance……%

Last Year's Attendance……..…..…%

Number of unauthorised absence sessions during previous 10 school weeks ……

Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed?

.....

What action are other schools taking?

.....

.....

Leave in term time Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is **agreed/is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed……..

Job Title…….……

PrintName …… Date ……..…..…

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent .....