



# Lanner Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Date approved	28/3/19
Review date	28/3/20/Reviewed on 17/9/21
Head teacher	Kieran Walsh
Governor approval	28/3/19

### **Lanner's values:**

We believe every child deserves the very best education possible and we strive to deliver this on a daily basis. At Lanner we recognise that regular attendance and punctuality is a crucial factor in learning. It impacts on their attainment, relationships with their peers and overall enjoyment of school life in general.

We expect very high levels of attendance from all of our children and will challenge parents and carers accordingly.

Our whole school targets:

- 2018/2019: 97.5%
- 2019/2020: 98%
- 2020/2021: 99%

### **Overall Aims:**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with parents, individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

### **The Law:**

The law defines compulsory school age as between 5 and 16 years old.

### **Parents**

Parents must secure full-time education for children of compulsory school age. The education must be suited to the child's age, aptitude and ability, and to any special needs the child has. Parents can secure education for their child by registering the child with a school or by providing an alternative means of education. A child who is registered with a school must attend regularly and punctually.

### **Children's Services Authority**

As a local authority (LA), Cornwall Council must ensure that:

- There are enough school places for the children in its area.
- Parents secure full-time education for their children.

## Schools

Schools must:

- Record attendance at the start of the school day and during the afternoon on a paper or computer register.
- Inform the LA if:
  - a pupil fails to attend regularly.
  - a pupil is absent for 10 or more school days in a row. The school should tell the LA why the pupil is absent if it knows.
- Record in the register whether absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Publish the percentage and number of authorised and unauthorised absences in the governor's termly report.
- Comment on any unauthorised absence in pupils' annual reports.
- Allow Cornwall Council to inspect the register during school hours.

### Register codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
I	Present (AM)	Present
l	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence

V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

**Head Teacher:**

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Cornwall Local Authority policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires. The day-to-day running of this will be delegated to the learning mentor and or the admin staff.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse weekly/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the School Administrator to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

**Learning Mentor:**

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child does not come to school and no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for year groups.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the Head teacher if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for Head teacher and SLT to analyse..
- To record reasons for absence and update class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of SIMs registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers by letter, following 5 instances of lateness or absence.
- To liaise with, and report to, outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures when parents have failed to notify the school of absence.

**Staff:**

- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the SIMs register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is carried out via SIMS 9.00-9.05 am and 1.00-1.10 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.

- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the Head teacher and or the learning mentor, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings and on reports.

### **Parents:**

Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache or a stomach ache then parents should inform the school but still bring them in.

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- **Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.**
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child.
- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

### **The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:**

- Support the school in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions, e.g. Spotlight.
- Work with families and other agencies to remove barriers to good attendance.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection.

## **Strategies for promoting/rewarding good attendance:**

### **Aims:**

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (97% or above) is regularly promoted and supported and remains a high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

### **Weekly Celebration Assemblies**

Celebration Assemblies are held every week on Friday. The class with the highest attendance will receive an additional 15 minutes playtime and parents are informed via the weekly newsletter. Where a class achieves 100% attendance and punctuality the teacher or HT may well decide to offer an additional reward.

### **Termly attendance awards**

Any child who has had 100% attendance for the term automatically receives a reward certificate to be issued by either the head teacher or the learning mentor.

### **Termly traffic light letter**

Parents are sent a colour coded letter every term. This letter provides details as to where their child lies in relation to their attendance. If the letter is printed on green paper then this signifies that their child is in line or above national expectations. Amber highlights any child that is very close to or may have just dipped into an area below the national average and the red letter signifies that their attendance is below national averages.

### **Breakfast Club**

Breakfast Club runs daily from 7.30 a.m. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 7.30am, ensuring they are on time for school. Prices and menus for breakfast club are on the school's website. The club is supervised by two members of staff.

### **Staff Promoting Good Attendance**

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

## **Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality**

### **Class Registers**

Class registers are recorded using SIMs. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

## **Morning Register**

Class registers remain open until 9:05am. At that point, the teacher may submit their final register and close down SIMs. The teacher may submit the register as many times as they wish before 9.05 am (e.g. if a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 9.05 am the register must be correct and submitted.

From 9.05 am the school playground gates are closed. A member of staff is on the entrances every morning to greet children and parents. Any child arriving after this time has to enter the building via the main reception and sign in accordingly. The school secretary will then mark these children in as late using the correct code.

Once registers have been submitted the school secretary or learning mentor will start the process of 'first call home'. A text message to all parents who have not already called in with a reason for absence will be sent, asking parents/carers to reply before 10.00a.m. If no text message reply is received, the secretary or learning mentor will then attempt to contact the parent by phone to ascertain where the child is. If the secretary cannot make contact with the parents then the child will be marked as 'Unauthorised' in the register.

On certain occasions and for some specific groups of children, the head teacher will make the 'first call home'.

## **Afternoon Register**

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence. They should be completed by 1.10p.m.

## **Request for absence of leave – Extended holidays**

The Head teacher determines whether leave is authorised. Extended holidays during school times are not encouraged and will only be authorised under exceptional circumstances. Any child that is taken out of school for an extended holiday during term time without written consent from the Head teacher authorising them to do so, will be marked as unauthorised in the register. A follow up letter may subsequently be sent informing parents/carers that their child's attendance will now be under closer monitoring and remind them of the importance of good attendance.

## **Referral process**

If a child's attendance drops below 97%, the Head Teacher and the learning mentor may issue a first letter. If a child has had a sustained period of absence through sickness then they will not issue a letter; however, they will monitor the situation carefully. If the child has had lots of 'broken' weeks, missing one or two days per week then they will issue letter 1. If the attendance does not improve by the time of the next monitoring cycle (a month later) then a 2nd letter is issued. If the attendance does not improve again, a third and final letter is sent to the parents. The next step is to mark all absences for that child as unauthorised; if there are 10 unauthorised sessions by the next month or if attendance has not significantly improved then a referral will be made to EWS (Educational Welfare Services)

## **Referral Process and Role of EWS**

The main role of the Council's EWS is to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. The EWS does so in partnership with school and parents. The EWS provides different levels of Service Level Agreements (SLA) to schools, but will initiate all prosecutions on behalf of any school in Cornwall.

All schools, regardless of whether they hold an SLA or not, must refer any child to EWS where the child:

- Is removed from school to be Electively Home Educated. More information is available at: <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/elective-home-education/>
- Has been 'missing' from school and no contact can be made with parents. (See CME Protocol on School Messenger)

### **Referrals to the Education Welfare Service:**

All schools should have procedures in place to address poor attendance. This section provides details on how EWS manage referrals for schools with an SLA

#### **Stage 1: Referral to the Education Welfare Service**

Before making a referral to the EWS, you must try to contact the parent to resolve the problem.

You may choose to make a referral to the EWS if you are concerned about a pupil's absence. You may make a referral to the EWS if a pupil has had 10 or more unauthorised half-day absences during any 100 half days.

You must make the referral on form EWS1 (see Appendix 1). You must give the EWS details of the pupil's attendance for the past 100 half days.

Referrals may be passed to the designated EWO for your school or sent to [eworeferrals@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:eworeferrals@cornwall.gov.uk). It is advised that any referral that is sent via email is encrypted.

#### **Stage 2: Action plan**

On receiving a referral, an EWO will try to contact the pupil's parents within five working days. On contacting the parents, the EWO will normally arrange a home visit to assess the situation. The home visit usually takes place within a further five working days. The home visit should result in a plan setting out actions with timescales and their intended results. The EWO will try to agree the action plan with the family, the school and any other agencies involved and the plan will set out the roles and responsibilities of each. The EWS will produce the action plan within five working days of the home visit and will send a copy to the school as soon as possible.

The EWS records information about all referrals for non-attendance, including the pupil's attendance for the most recent 100 half days. This enables the team manager to monitor the effectiveness of the service by comparing attendance before and after the EWS became involved.



### **Stage 3: Internal review of attendance**

Starting 10 days after the receipt of the referral, the EWO monitors the pupil's attendance for 100 half days. If the pupil takes fewer than 10 half days' unauthorised absence during this period, the EWS may close the case. You can refer the case back to the EWS at any time.

If a pupil takes 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence, the EWS will arrange an internal attendance review as quickly as possible (normally within two weeks). At the review, the EWO will discuss the case with the Senior EWO and consider whether to start legal action. If the EWS decides not to start legal action, it will take some other action. For example it may call a family group conference, which must take place within six weeks of the review (see Appendix 3).

### **Stage 4: First warning**

If the EWS decides to take legal action, it will send a warning letter within five days of the review. The EWO will then monitor the pupil's attendance at least every two weeks for 10 weeks.

If the pupil takes fewer than 10 half days of unauthorised absence in the next 100 half days, the EWS may close the case. You can make another referral to the EWS at any time.

If the pupil takes 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence during the next 100 half days after the first warning, the EWS will hold an educational planning meeting within two weeks.

### **Stage 5: Final warning**

The Educational Planning Meeting (EPM) will normally involve social care, the pupil, the pupil's family, the school and any other agencies involved. The meeting usually takes place at the pupil's school but it will be arranged and normally chaired by the EWO. For more complex cases, the Senior EWO may chair the meeting.

At the meeting, the EWS will consider the case, consult social care about applying for an education supervision order, and decide whether to take legal action.

In some cases, the EWS will try other ways of improving attendance before serving a final warning. But it will serve a final warning within two weeks if a pupil takes 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence during the next 100 half days. The legal action that the EWS will consider at an EPM will include:

- Applying for an education supervision order (the Children Act 1989, section 36)
- Prosecuting the parents (the Education act 1996, section 444).
- Issuing a Penalty Notice under the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 and 2007.
- Issuing a Caution under Police & Criminal Evidence Act (1984).

The EWO will agree a plan for improvement and make any recommendations for legal processes to be followed. These recommendations will then be reviewed by the Senior EWO.

## **Stage 6: Prosecution**

If the pupil takes fewer than 10 half days of unauthorised absence in the 100 half days after the final warning, the EWS may close the case. The school can refer the case back to the EWS at any time.

If the pupil takes 10 or more half days of unauthorised absence, the EWS will prepare the papers for a prosecution immediately.

If a Parenting Order is recommended or given by the court, the EWS will inform Social Care.

## **Traveller absence**

At Lanner we respect all others religious beliefs and backgrounds and follow strict guidelines with regards to equality and equal opportunities. Children from traveller families are entitled to 100 days authorised absence in a school year (to be recorded with a T in the register), if they are travelling for work or religious reasons. If they are absent for any other reasons then these sessions will be marked as unauthorised and the same procedures for non-travelling families will apply. For additional information please refer to the Educational Welfare Service Team (Travelling community)

## A guide for parents

### **1. When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school with sufficient time to be ready to join their class for the start of the day, doors open from 8.30am. The register is taken at 8.50am, afternoon school starts at 1.00pm.

### **2. What happens if my child is late?**

The gates are shut at 9am. Pupils who arrive after this time should report to the school office where they will sign in the Late Register.

A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to referral to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

### **3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:30 a.m. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the Education Welfare Service.

### **4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness (in rare cases, where a child's attendance is low parents/carers may have to provide medical evidence if this has been requested by the school. Failure to provide the evidence will result in the absence being unauthorised)
- Emergency dental/medical appointment, please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays.
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Absence for exceptional circumstances, this may include some holidays when prior approval has been given.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

**5 What is unacceptable?** The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances; family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

### **7 Can we take family holidays during term-time?**

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given. You need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time. You should complete an exceptional leave of absence application form (see appendix) stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The governors have the right to refuse permission.

**8. I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?**

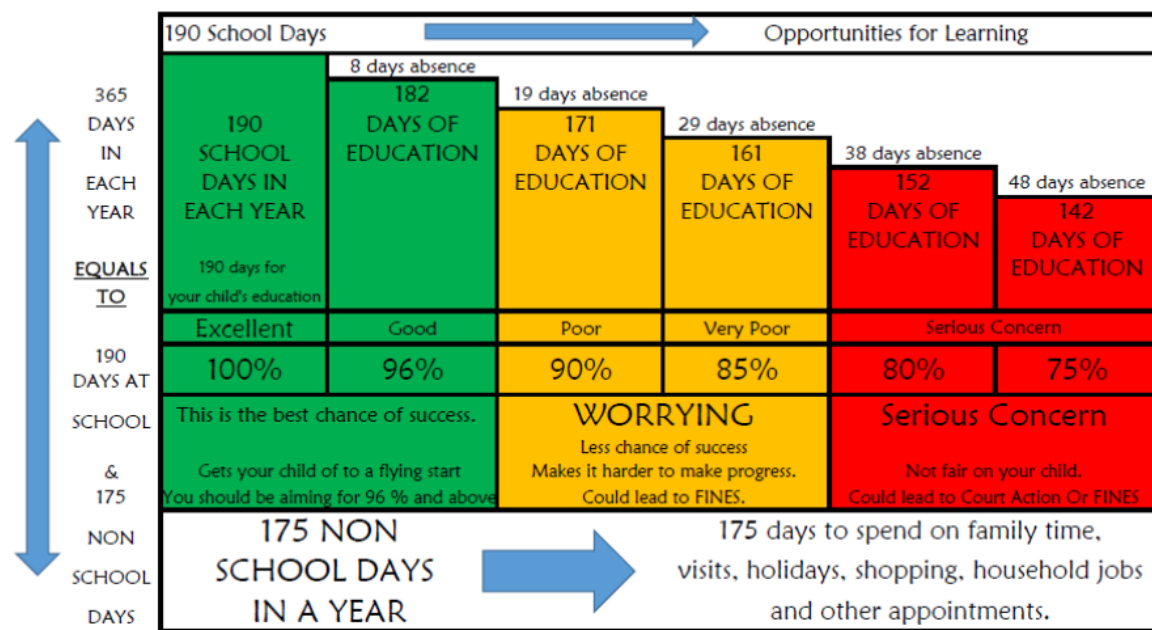
The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family, particularly for minority ethnic families. Contact your child's class teacher or form tutor as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit. The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the school then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away. As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

**9 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he / she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

**10. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.



Please help us to help you. If you are worried about your child's school attendance, then staff are available at school and within the local authority who can help and support you. Gaps in education can mean your child will not reach their full potential.

**Addendum:** Covid 19 has had a big impact on attendance. At time of reviewing this policy (September 2021), we are currently seeking to align our attendance policy across the MAT. An update to policy will be available in the autumn term 2021.

**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL  
DURING TERM TIME**

Pupil's Name ..... Year .....

Home address .....

.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of last day at school ..... Date of return to school .....

Total number of school days missed .....

Reasons for absence from school .....

.....

.....

.....

I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed, then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons or irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application .....

Signed ..... Date .....

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FROM TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE GIVING AT  
LEAST 4 WEEK'S NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE**

For office use – Authorised: ..... Signed .....