



# Attendance Policy

<b>Head Teacher</b>	Mrs Tracey Wilson
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	Mr Stephen Forster
<b>Date Written</b>	November 2023
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**Attendance Policy**

**Lumley Primary Federation**

**Attendance key contact List**

Name	Role	Contact details
Tracey Wilson	Head Teacher	0191 3882310 Or via Weduc App
Louise Phillips	Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance – Lumley Infant and Nursery School	0191 3885292 Or via Weduc App
Carol Hughes	Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance – Lumley Junior School	0191 3882310 Or via Weduc App

**Who in school can help if you need to report a pupil absence:**

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Clare Howells	Infant Office Contact to report a pupil absence	0191 3885292
Tracey Unwin	Junior Office Staff Contact to report a pupil absence	0191 3882310

**Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:**

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Louise Phillips	Infant and Nursery School Deputy Head Teacher	0191 3885292 Or via Weduc App
Carol Hughes	Lumley Junior School Deputy Head Teacher	0191 3882310 Or via Weduc App

## **Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos**

Lumley Primary Federation seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises their opportunities to realise his/her/their true potential. The schools will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be, and are, keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. Our schools provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils, improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in both schools, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

## **Why is regular attendance so important?**

Being in school every day that it is open is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results. The latest results (2019) shows that of pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard in their Year 6 SATS compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Good attendance is central to our school values of DREAMS and ASPIRE as pupils are expected to demonstrate a positive attitude, determination and resilience in their learning.

## **This policy is supported by our policies on:**

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Anti Bullying
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

**The schools and all partners will work together to:**

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents; to build a culture where all can (and want to) be in school; to prioritise attendance improvement across the school.



**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, to work with pupils and parents to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **1. Expectations**

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

### **We will ensure that:**

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

## **2. Attendance data**

Both schools will monitor attendance data closely. Our target for all pupils is at least 95% attendance (this equates to missing approximately 9.5 days of school across the academic year). Where a pupil's attendance drops below 95% (unless this is due to a specific medical condition or other authorised reason) school will contact parents via phone or letter to discuss how we can help improve attendance. Schools also analyse patterns in attendance, for example frequent absences on a Monday or Friday, and will seek to discuss patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible so that all parties can work together to resolve and issues.

## **3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance**

Lumley Primary Federation understands that there are sometimes barriers to attendance. We encourage open dialogue between school and home to address these barriers and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them. Each case is considered on an individual basis as a 'one size fits all' approach is not suitable. There are many options to try and we encourage parents and carers to speak with us as soon as attendance begins to become an issue. Where appropriate, the pupil will also be part of the discussions so that they can identify barriers and solutions to help improve their attendance.

## **4. Facilitate support**

Lumley Primary Federation is a caring and welcoming school. We hope that all parents and carers feel able to approach us for support in improving children's attendance. If necessary, Lumley Primary Federation can help pupils and parents to access further support. This may include Early Help or referrals to other agencies such as the Emotion Wellbeing Team to guide and support children.

## **5. Formalise support**

If absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, school will work with families to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is offered to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support in conjunction with the Local Authority.

## **6. Enforce**

If all the previous steps have not achieved an improvement in attendance and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary. Parents and carers may be fined or prosecuted to protect the pupil's right to an education.

For more information please see <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

### **Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes**

#### **Attendance and absence management**

##### **Communication**

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be (unless this is due to, for example, medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent, you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us so we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss how we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

##### **On the first day of absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office on 0191 3885292 (Lumley Infants and Nursery School) or 0191 3882310 (Lumley Junior School), giving an honest reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home, then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctor's and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment, they should do so.

**Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will phone parents and carers to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action. Unauthorised absences can also be given for inadequate reasons for absence.

**Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parents provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All communication made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

**Punctuality:****Lumley Infant and Nursery School:**

We offer a staggered start to help with morning drop offs and congestion in school. Reception doors are open from 8:40am to 8:50am, Year 1 and Year 2 doors are open from 8:30 to 8:40am, and Nursery doors are open from 8:30am (9am for 30 hours pupils). If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after their door closes, a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a 'late after registers close' mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

**Lumley Junior School:**

Supervision is available on the yard from 8.30am. Children arrive at school from 8.30am until 8.50am. At this point, the pupil entry gate will be locked and all late pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class.

If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a 'late after registers close' mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

**If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance database. Parents will be asked to sign their children in using the iPad in the School Office.

**If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions**

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment will be offered to discuss ways to improve punctuality.

**If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason**

A letter will be sent home from school to offer a planning meeting. This will aim to address any issues which may be causing the poor punctuality.

**If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality**

A referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

**Help & Support**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed, we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time, from the right people.

**Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **if there are exceptional circumstances**. The schools will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available on the Weduc App or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.**

**Pupils with specific needs**

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst considering the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance.

**Children Missing from Education**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details



change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Please refer to

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1073619/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf) for further information.

### **Parents and carers are expected to:**

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

### **Schools are expected to:**

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.

### **Governors are expected to:**

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.

### **General / frequently asked questions**

#### **When can children be absent from school?**

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

**What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?**

You should contact the school as early as possible to explain why, by phoning the office on 0191 3885292 (Lumley Infants and Nursery School) or 0191 3882310 (Lumley Junior School). If you have not contacted school to explain your child's absence, school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for **before** your child will be absent and will only be granted **in exceptional circumstances**.

Your child's headteacher or the deputy head teachers have the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request, as well as your child's current rate of attendance.

**Can I take my child on holiday during term time?**

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in **exceptional circumstances**, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There is the possibility that you may be issued with a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.