



Leigh Academy
MINSTER

Attendance and Punctuality Policy (2024-25)

Our Vision Statement:

We believe that every learner is entitled to a high quality, varied and personalised education; delivered through a broad and balanced curriculum that provides challenge, irrespective of need, starting point or background. Our commitment to maximising the potential of every child; teaching them the skills they need to be successful and nurturing a desire to be a lifelong learner, will prepare them for whichever career path they choose to follow. At Leigh Academy Minster we inspire our learners to be responsible for their own learning, to be independent and have ambitions to develop themselves and enhance their community.

Our Academy community works collaboratively to achieve success and develop its own unique character. Our belief in 'human scale' education, delivered through a small school college model, means every one of our students is known and valued. Strong pastoral care is at the heart of our academy and we place great importance on building strong partnerships with parents and carers.

Our inclusive community has ambition, drive and responsibility. We embrace a high challenge, high support culture and seek positive collaboration with others. At Leigh Academy Minster our community allows ambition to take flight.

Our Mission:

'Leigh Academy Minster - Where ambition takes flight'

Our Values:

Ambition - Striving for Excellence

We encourage individuals to set high aspirations, push boundaries, and pursue their goals with determination. Ambition fuels innovation and fosters a culture of excellence, empowering individuals to reach new heights and make meaningful contributions.

Character - Integrity and Authenticity

Character is the foundation of our identity, built on the principles of integrity, honesty, and authenticity. We believe in the importance of maintaining strong moral and ethical values in all interactions. Our commitment to character ensures a culture of trust, respect, and transparency, fostering meaningful connections and genuine relationships within our community.

Achievement - Continuous Learning and Innovation

We celebrate achievement as a result of continuous learning and innovation. We value the pursuit of knowledge and the willingness to adapt and evolve. Through a commitment to excellence, we recognise and reward accomplishments that contribute to personal and collective growth. Achievement is not just a destination but a journey of exploration, curiosity, and improvement.

Responsibility - Accountability and Guardianship

Responsibility is at the core of our values, emphasising accountability and guardianship. We believe in taking ownership of our actions, decisions, and their consequences. As responsible members of our community, we are committed to environmental and social stewardship, making choices that positively impact our surroundings and the well-being of others.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

‘Where ambition takes flight’

Leigh Academy Minster is a place of prosperity and innovation, where the academy community's ambition and character foster a culture of achievement and responsibility. We are a safe, caring community where all staff and students are valued and empowered to develop a knowledgeable, inquisitive and reflective approach to learning, whilst ensuring they contribute to The Minster Way, resulting in a respectful and purposeful environment for all.

1. Aims and objective

There is a strong relationship between positive attendance and achievement. We believe that every student will benefit from the education provided at Leigh Academy Minster and therefore regular attendance is crucial. The aim of this policy is to provide transparency, ensure consistency and facilitate regular attendance for every child, regardless of their age or background. The policy has also been created using the legal framework and recent DfE guidance ‘Working together to improve school attendance’.

At Leigh Academy Minster we will ensure that:

- Every student has the right and access to a broad and balanced education
- No student is deprived of their education opportunities by either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students
- Rapid action is taken, where necessary to ensure an improvement in attendance or punctuality

At Leigh Academy Minster Academy we recognise that:

- The vast majority of our students want to attend to learn, socialise with peers and fully prepare themselves fully to take their place in society
- Students and their families may require support at some stage in meeting attendance obligations and responsibilities
- Students who attend and are punctual, or make significant improvements need to be rewarded so this is recognised and encouraged
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's attendance at the academy as set out by law (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996).

At Leigh Academy Minster we will encourage 100% attendance by:

- Clear, consistent communication with parents/carers about importance of regular, prompt attendance
- Communicate with families to set improvement targets, when necessary, and share these with students and families
- Ensuring that there is the accurate completion of registers within the first 15 minutes of each lesson
- Contact families, usually by text, if their child is absent and no reason has been received
- Utilise external agencies, where appropriate, to help support students/families when necessary

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been created to include all requirements of the Department for Education's ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) (August 2024) and ['Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'](#) (March 2024). It also refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on ['School attendance parental responsibility measures'](#) (January 2015). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties from all stakeholders: The Education Act 1996, The Education Act 2002, The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The Education (Student registration) Regulations 2006.

This Policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. The Education Act 1996 states that: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient, full-time education suitable:

- A. to their age, ability and aptitude
- B. to any special educational needs, they may have
- C. either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Leigh Academy Minster and the Leigh Academies Trust are dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and have set out this Attendance Policy accordingly.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Kent County Council

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, Kent County Council will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear to both families and students
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, families and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure that the Academy is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for the children who are educated off-site.
- Have a school liaison officer (Inclusion & Attendance) to provide core functions
 - Communicate and advice: regularly provide updates, share examples of good practice, provide training where necessary
 - Multi-disciplinary support for families: including access to Early Help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and remove the barriers to attendance
 - Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention where other support has not been successful or engaged with
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their virtual school.

2. Leigh Academies Trust (including the Attendance Officer)

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, LAT Governance will:

- Review attendance regularly and scrutinise data, holding leaders to account
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and students to implement the policy effectively.
- AO to support the academy with improving attendance (including weekly visits to discuss current attendance and carry out home visits where necessary).

3. Academy Leadership Team

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy Leadership Team will:

- Nominate a member of the Senior Leadership Team to oversee attendance throughout the Academy and an Attendance Lead to coordinate attendance across the academy. The academy's Senior Attendance Champion is Louise Hudson (louise.hudson@minster.latrust.org.uk), who is an Assistant Principal.
- Be active in their approach to promoting excellent attendance to both students and parents/carers.
- Ensure that the Academy's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught about the importance and value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.

- Review the Attendance policy annually and ensure it is updated with Government legislation, Local Authority guidance and that the Senior Leadership Team are aware of guidance/legislation
- Ensure staff are up to date with the Attendance policy, their roles in promoting and recording attendance as well as how to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Report regularly to both Leigh Academies Trust and Kent County Council the attendance data
- Ensure clear systems are in place to record and report attendance and that they work effectively.

4. Attendance Lead

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy Attendance Lead will:

- Review attendance regularly
- Regularly review, alongside the attendance leads from each college and ensure letters are sent to parents/carers whose attendance has become a concern
- Coordinate daily texts to go out to parents/carers where their child is absent without notification
- Offer support via external agencies to encourage positive relationships to improve attendance.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their virtual school
- Coordinate rewards and reporting of attendance across the academy

5. All staff

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, all staff will:

- Complete their registers within the first 20 minutes of every lesson
- Discuss attendance with their tutees and report any possible barriers to the relevant pastoral teams
- Promote positive attendance during tutor times and Enrichment lessons
- Actively engage in any CPD on or around attendance

6. Parents/Carers

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, all parents/carers will:

- Ensure the Academy have up to date contact details for their child (including contact numbers and addresses)
- Ensure their child attends the academy during academy hours and to avoid appointments during these times
- To make contact with their child's College pastoral team, before 9am, in the event their child is unable to attend
- To communicate with the relevant College pastoral team in the event there are any barriers to their child attending, using contact information provided on the [academy's website](#).

4. Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an accurate attendance register, and all students 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 record whether every student is:

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

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Students must arrive in school no later than 8.25am on each school day for the first period at 8:30am. The register for the first session will be taken during period 1 on each school day. The register for the second session will be taken during period 3 on each school day.

5. Absences

Unplanned absence and illnesses

Families must notify the Academy on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am. This can be done by email or telephone to the Academy. Where a student exceeds more than 3 days absence within a year, medical evidence may be requested for any further future absences.

Medical or dental appointments

Families should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, students should attend the Academy for as much of that day as possible.

Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the Academy will authorise absence such as a family bereavement. All authorised absences other than medical appointments or illness require a leave of absence request to be emailed to the Academy. The absence request will only become authorised via a return confirmation email.

Fixed term suspensions

In the event a student is issued with a fixed term suspension, this is treated as an authorised absence. These will be dealt with in line with the Academy's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Family holidays and extended leave

We cannot permit leave of absence for holidays. The Principal has power to grant authorised absence for exceptional circumstances. In the event there is such a request this must be put in writing to the attention of the relevant Head of College and we ask for a minimum of two weeks notice.

Religious observance

The Academy recognises there may be times where students of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of the academy's holidays and weekends. We will allow authorised absences for these times. These absences will be verified by our Attendance Officer in conjunction with KCC as they hold the official record for dates of religious observance. Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notice in advance.

6. Attendance monitoring

Attendance monitoring for students at risk/vulnerable All students are monitored closely including any student who is recorded as vulnerable or at risk. All concerns are recorded, reported and acted upon immediately with appropriate staff and external agencies where necessary. Safeguarding procedures and agency referral procedures are followed when required, as set out in our safeguarding policy.

6.1 Persistence and severe absence

Students who have less than 90% attendance at any one time are recorded as persistent absentees. Those with less than 50% attendance at any one time are recorded as severe absentees.

6.2 Children Missing from Education (CME)

KCC procedures to safeguard missing children states that the Attendance Officer/Lead should be responsible for the check and referral of any student who has not attended, been seen or contact made from parents regarding their absence of more than 20 sessions (2 weeks). A home visit will be conducted before this referral is made.

7.0 Interventions & Penalty Notices

The Academy & KCC will make use of a full range of interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools/academies and Kent County Council to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

These are:

- Attendance Improvement Plans
- Education supervision orders (issued by KCC)
- Attendance prosecution (AS1 referral completed by the Academy to KCC)
- Parenting Orders and Voluntary Orders (KCC)
- Fixed Penalty Notices (KCC)

KCC can fine any adult with the day-to-day care for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be directly paid to KCC.

A referral to Kent County Council will be made dependent on criteria being met. This may take into account:

- 10 sessions for 5 days unauthorised absence within 100 days (this can include being late after 9am)
- One-off instances such as unauthorised holiday (10 sessions or 5 days)
- Where a fixed term suspended student is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, KCC can decide whether to prosecute a parent or withdraw the notice.

8. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Students arriving late cannot start the day effectively, they disrupt lessons, and encourage absence or poor punctuality in others. Our academy has dedicated transport links and bus services, therefore traffic issues will not be a valid excuse unless a major incident has taken place.

Where students are late to the academy for no good reason the following punctuality protocols will be applied. A same day loss of personal time (LOPT) will be issued.

The academy day starts at 8.30am and we expect students to be through the gate and on their way to their Period 1 lesson by 8.25am.

Any student who arrives after 8:25am will be automatically recorded as an unauthorised lateness. Students who are consistently late will trigger a parental meeting with the Attendance Advisory Officer for consideration of a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service.

Poor punctuality is classed as irregular academy attendance and is dealt with accordingly, this may mean that parents or carers could face the possibility of legal action. If you know your child is going to be late for a specific reason please call the academy before 8:30am, following the same procedures for absence.

9. Removing a Student from Roll

As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, when all possible actions have been taken we will remove the student from academy roll due to continued serious absence.

Where a student has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the student not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the student is, and if unable to establish the student's whereabouts we will remove from roll. (Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006)

Where a student has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the student not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the student is, and if unable to establish the student's whereabouts we will remove from roll. (Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

10. Education for health needs including SEMH

In the event a student is identified as having health needs (including SEMH) the academy will work with the family to explore support and interventions.

'Working together to improve school attendance.' (Published May 2022)

Students with medical conditions or SEND Point 40:

'Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students should be the same as they are for any other student. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, schools should be mindful of the barriers these students face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.'

Point 41. 'Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.'

11. Elective Home Education (EHE)

If parents or carers take the dedicated decision to educate a child at home, they must tell the academy of this in writing- this letter or email should be addressed to the Principal and include the date of decision to home educate and a brief explanation of the reasons for EHE. Once this letter is received, the academy will remove the student from the academy roll and advise the Elective Home Education Officer of the Local Authority, who will make contact with parents or carers. If an EHE request letter or email is not received, the student remains on the academy roll and action may be undertaken following irregular or non-academy attendance procedures, again this could lead to prosecution or an instant fine under the Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2003 and under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Addendum to policy regarding the inclusion and removal of students from the Academy role (September 2024):

We will only enter pupils on the admission register where we have received written confirmation that the person with control of the pupil's attendance has accepted the school place.

Where the local authority has offered a place at the school but no written confirmation of acceptance has been received from the person with control of the pupil's attendance, we will write to the local authority requesting evidence in writing and will not enter the pupil onto the admission register until this has been received. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the offer of a place will be withdrawn and offered to another pupil in accordance with our Admissions Policy.

We will enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name will be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be added before, or at the beginning of the first session on that day.

Where a pupil does not attend on the agreed date, we will send a letter to the person with control of the pupil's attendance asking them to confirm in writing within 10 school days that they wish to take up the place. If written confirmation is not received within 10 school days, the pupil's name will be removed from the admission register and the place offered to another pupil in accordance with the admission policy.