

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

The attendance of children and young people at school is of vital importance. If children and young people do not attend school regularly their acquisition of skills and knowledge is interrupted and their educational achievements are potentially damaged.

At Leweston we see education as a partnership between the family and the School. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for our pupils, and we look to parents to support this objective, thus contributing to keeping children safe and improving their outcomes, wellbeing and future prospects. Leweston believes that early identification, communication and action on attendance issues are critical in achieving successful outcomes.

This policy is not exhaustive and recognises that attendance is a very complex and diverse issue, and that each individual's circumstances will be different. It does, however, incorporate the latest Government guidance, legislation and recommendations.

Leweston will work alongside Dorset County Council on any issues of attendance, and the Responsible Officer and contact details are below:

Responsible Officer for the School Attendance Service

Dorset County Council
Monkton Park
Winterborne Monkton
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PS

01305 224728 / schoolattendance@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996 and 2002
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and 1963
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

- DfE (2025) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education: guidance for schools'
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing daily pupil attendance data'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour (Code of Conduct) Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Record Keeping Policy

Attendance

All pupils are required to be in School for registration at 8.20am. The School day ends at 4.25pm, although many pupils remain later to attend pay Pupil Prep sessions (in the Pensabene Library or the Prep Library) or take part in extra-curricular activities under the supervision of a member of staff.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the School day, unless accompanied by a member of staff on a trip, visit or sporting fixture, the dates of which will have been given to all parents and staff in advance.

The School completes morning and afternoon registration, and on each session for every school day, pupils are marked as:

- present
- attending an approved educational activity
- absent, or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Pupil absence

Parents should inform the school of unexpected pupil absence via the Parent Portal. Failing this they should email or telephone Reception on 01963 210691. If a pupil is absent without notice at registration, the School will telephone the parent before 9.30am to verify that the pupil is at home.

If a pupil is absent for more than one day their parent should telephone again or email the School explaining the absence.

With any pupil absence, the School will ascertain the reason for the absence, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken, identify whether the absence is approved or not, and identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the School's electronic register.

We do not condone truancy from the School day as a whole, or any one lesson period, and recognize our duty of care to our pupils during the School day. For this reason we ask for written or emailed parental permission to cover any request for absence.

Authorised Absence

Only the School can authorise a pupil's absence. An absence must not automatically be recorded as authorised simply because it is covered by a note from the pupil's parent. If a pupil is absent, the absence must only be recorded as authorised if:

- the pupil has been granted leave of absence, i.e. the absence has been approved beforehand by the School, or
- the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or some other unavoidable cause, or on a day that the pupil's parents' religion sets aside for religious activities.

Requests for leave of absence for medical or dental appointments must be made via the Parent Portal.

Requests for any other leave of absence must be made in writing and in advance by the parent to the Head. Permission for an absence during term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Unauthorised Absence

If the reason for a pupil's absence has not been established at the time the register is taken, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised. Any subsequent correction to a register recording an absence as authorised must be made as soon as is practicable after the reason for the absence has been established. Unauthorised absences include, but are not limited to:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

Leweston will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing PA, the SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
 - Sending letters to parents and having discussions with parents to establish causes and to endeavour to assist in getting the child back to school.

- Having a weekly tutor review.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome the pupil back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning.
- Meet with the pupil to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead weekly check-ins to review progress and assess the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with the pupil's parent to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including with regard to additional vulnerability.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Pupils with EAL

Approved Educational Activities

An approved educational activity is an activity which takes place outside of the School, is approved by the School and is supervised by a person authorised to do so by the School.

Lateness

The School follows the Department for Education recommendation that registers will stay open for 30 minutes after the start of the registration period. The registration period starts at 8.20am in the morning, and 2.20pm in the afternoon.

If a pupil arrives before the register has closed, the lateness will be recorded using the appropriate code (*L*), which will register as an attendance.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed this will be recorded using the appropriate code (*O*), which will register as an unauthorised absence.

Removal from School Roll

There are fifteen circumstances when a pupil of compulsory school age can be removed from the admission register. This includes when a pupil has ceased to attend school and the parent/carer has indicated in writing to the school that the pupil is being electively home educated. As indicated below, in this instance, the School will inform the local authority.

A pupil's name cannot be removed from the admission register because of poor/irregular attendance, nor can it be deleted at the request of a parent or carer.

Attendance for Boarding Pupils

Pupils are expected to live with parents or guardians when away from School on Exeats and half term during term time. Written authority to the pupil's Houseparent must be given before they leave the School to stay with another family.

The Head of Boarding must be telephoned if a pupil is taken ill during an Exeat weekend. The pupil should bring a letter signed by a parent/guardian on their return to School giving a reason for the absence. Parents will always be telephoned if a pupil is significantly later than expected in returning from an Exeat.

Term dates are published well in advance, and as such we ask that flights for overseas boarders should be booked as far as possible in advance so as to avoid disruption to the pupil's education. Therefore, boarding pupils must arrive punctually on the first day of term, and are not to leave School before the end of term.

Children Missing Education

The government has placed a duty on local authorities (Education and Inspections Act 2006) to make arrangements to establish (as far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education.

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to all children of compulsory school age who are neither on a school roll nor being educated other than at school, or who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the procedure outlined in the 'Missing Pupil Policy' for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

If a pupil is going to be deleted from the Leweston admissions register, the DSL will notify the local authority under any of the grounds set out in the Education Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This will not apply where the pupil has completed Year 13, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

As set out by the amendments to the Education Regulations 2006, the School will inform the LA of any reason to delete a pupil from the admissions register, including where the pupil:

- Has been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education,
- Has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school,

- Has been certified by the School Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parents has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age,
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to school at the end of that period,
- Has been permanently excluded.
- Has been registered at another school but is not being dual registered
- Has been continuously absent for a period of no less than 20 school days without the School's permission.
- Has died.
- Has been admitted to the School to receive nursery education, and they have not transferred to a Reception, or higher, class at the School on completing their nursery education.

When the school is notifying the LA that a pupil's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- The reason under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Updated: August 2025

Next review: August 2028