“Together, we inspire a lifelong love of learning.”

Longnor CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2025

Reviewed by: L. Edgerton Position: Head teacher	Date: 7th October 2025 Approved by: Full governors

Review Date: September 2026

Introduction

Longnor CE Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations (working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education, September 2022). The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

School's roles and responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) at Longnor CE Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Leader

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. As the Attendance Leader, the Headteacher will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Governing Body and that they are fully aware of attendance data and targets. The Headteacher will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. The admin staff complete the registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	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
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised 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

The register will be called promptly at **08:50 am** and **1 pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

The registers will close at 9.00 am and 1.15 pm. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be marked as **U (unauthorised absence).** Any child arriving late but before the closing of the register will be marked as **late.**

Categorising absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked **unauthorised absence** unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

Longnor CE Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Longnor CE Primary School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If **no explanation** about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Absence will be **authorised** in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:
· a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority
· a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such a leave of absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong;

(f) in other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

Absences after close of class registers

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the class teacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Headteacher.

Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

Collection and analysis of data

The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and SIMS) within the stipulated time frame.

Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at Longnor CE Primary School. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

Longnor CE Primary School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The school office will contact the families for an explanation of absence and refer to the Headteacher. It should be stressed that it is every parent's responsibility to inform the school every day their child is absent from school.

First-day calling

Longnor CE Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Referral to the Education Welfare Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences up to 10 sessions or by the end of the specific time (sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office and will be recorded in the "Late Book". They will then be marked as late.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

Term-time Leave of Absence

Longnor CE Primary School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right and will not be authorised. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix), with appropriate evidence, in advance of the leave of absence. If the Headteacher feels that a child will significantly benefit from leave of absence during the term then the final decision rests with them. The following guidance has been proposed by Shropshire Local Authority:

· It is highly unlikely that the event will occur again in a child's school life
· It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event
· The event cannot be organised outside of the school term
· The event is necessary to the health and wellbeing of the child
· The child will not be disadvantaged by not being in school for the period of the event

Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Longnor CE Primary School

Longnor CE Primary School expects parents / carers will:

· ensure their children attend the school regularly;
· support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
· not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

·call Longnor CE Primary School on the first day of absence using the schools telephone line 01743 718493 or reporting to the school office.
· ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
· work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing reading records when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
· contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives Longnor CE Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

Pupils' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

Governors' responsibilities

The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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

Your child should be at school by 8:45 a.m. but not before 8:35 a.m. The register is taken at 8:50 a.m. Afternoon school starts at 1:00 p.m.

2. What happens if my child is late?

Registration finishes at 9.00 a.m. in the morning and 1 p.m. in the afternoon. Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office. 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 (and each subsequent day of absence). We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:00 a.m. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence. The telephone call will be logged and the reason for absence entered into our database. 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 Educational Welfare Service. Letters of explanation will only be required if, following a discussion with the headteacher or Education Welfare Officer, attendance has become a concern.

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness. However persistent illness without medical evidence will not be authorised. After more than 20 days illness parents will be expected to grant permission for the school to consult the medical practitioner concerned.

- Emergency dental/medical appointment. (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays.)

- Day of religious observance.

- Family bereavement

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.

6. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Family holidays should be taken during school holidays.

7. 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. Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

8. 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.

Appendix A

LONGNOR C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shropshire Council

Request for Pupil Leave of Absence From School In Exceptional Circumstances

Full name of child(ren) _____

_____

_____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Reason for application and dates _____

_____

_____

Full Name of parent(s)/carer(s) _____

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s) _____ Date:_____

Office use only ..... attach attendance certificate

☐ Authorised ☐ Unauthorised

Comments _____

Signed ..... Date: .....

The headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave.

1. The child's previous attendance history.
2. The age of the child(ren).
3. The child's stage of education.
4. The time of year (SATS or exams).
5. The nature of the trip (an exceptional experience)

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Return to parents

Response to request for pupil absence ☐ Authorised ☐ Unauthorised

Name of pupil(s) _____

Comments _____

_____

Signed ..... Position:..... Date .....