

Lincolnshire Wolds Federation Attendance Policy



Monitoring and review

The Executive Head is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy

Approval

This policy was agreed by the Standards Committee on: Tuesday 6 June 2017

Statement of Principle

The Lincolnshire Wolds Federation is committed to providing an appropriate and effective education for all students, in a safe and happy environment. Our aim is to empower all students to gain the essential skills both academically, personally and sociably, that will equip them to 'Learn for Life and Work for the Future'. The Federation believes sincerely that all students benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. To this end the Federation will do as much as it can to ensure that all students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

It is recognised that:

- All students of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No student should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of students and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many students and their parents may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of students and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

What do we expect from our students?

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform a member of staff/tutor of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

What do we expect from parents and carers?

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually and are ready for transport pick up times.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend, giving details of the reason for the absence and the length of time the child will be away.

- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affect the student's performance in school.
- To avoid, wherever possible, taking family holidays in term-time. Term time absences, especially during examination periods, may seriously affect the progress of your child.

What can you expect from us?

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Swift action on any problem notified to us.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

It is for the school, not the parent, to decide whether or not to authorise absences in line with legislation and policy. The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no parental explanation has been given
- For extended visits, overseas where no approval has been given
- Holidays in term time unless approval has been given
- For shopping trips
- For leisure days
- In other cases, where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation.

What if absence is unavoidable?

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised. Any requests for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Head of school / Executive Head Teacher.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Family holiday*
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

*Family Holidays

*Parents should not normally take students on holiday during the school term though schools are able to exercise their discretion when granting parental requests. However, each request will be considered individually taking into account the age of the child, previous attendance patterns, parental views and the educational progress of the child. If a request is not granted and the parent takes the child on holiday, the absence should not be authorised. If a request is granted the absence should not normally be for more than two weeks in any school year. If the holiday goes on for longer than agreed, the extra days' absence will be unauthorised. Any request should be in writing to the Head of School / Executive Head Teacher on a holiday form.

Change of Address / contact details

Parents must inform school immediately if they have a change of address or contact details. In case of emergency we must be able to contact the parents, carers or a third named person. Parents must provide this information when they first register their child and keep information updated.

Attendance will be encouraged through

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of the session. 9.00 – 9.30 / 1.00-1.30.
- Class staff carrying out ongoing monitoring of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognising and celebrating individual and group efforts.
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school
- The efficient use of computerised registration systems that can provide valuable year group, class and student level attendance data which enables speedy analysis and timely responses by the school, monitored by the Head of School on a weekly basis.
- The Head of School monitoring overall attendance and reporting the Advocate Body (LGB) termly (6 weekly).

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a student does not attend, the school will respond effectively to address the non-attendance.

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone, as soon as the registers have been submitted. The register is then amended to show the reason for absence. A message will be left on the home phone / mobile phone if we are able to speak to parents about their child's absence.
- Where there is no response, a letter will be sent on the second day and emergency contacts will be contacted.

- If required a further letter will then be sent after three days of unexplained nonattendance,
- or a visit from a member of the school staff.
- In continued non-attendance, the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Service and further action planned. This may, in appropriate cases, result in a referral to the EWS.
- After 10 days, unless other action is planned, the LA '**Students Not Attending Regularly**' team will be contacted and a letter sent to parents from the local authority.
- Parents may then be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, and possibly an EWO. Parent and student and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the student from attending school.
- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the Education Welfare Service with a view to a formal referral being made to Service, via a purchasing agreement with the school.

Where a child is a new Mid-Year starter but they have not turned up, there are two options:

- If the child still resides at the identified family address, the school will report through the new PNAR survey.
- The school have checked and the family are no longer at the residence, then the child should be reported as a Child Missing Education (CME) and then, following consultation with the CME Team, removed from roll if appropriate.

Students who arrive late at school due to difficulties with organised transport will be marked as present. Where patterns of consistent late running by contractors occur, the operator lead and Education transport department will be informed.

Students out of school for long periods due to ill health

School staff will work with families of students who have extended time out of school due to ill health. This may involve making a referral to the 'hospital school' to seek additional support.

The aim of any intervention is to work with families and students to successfully enable them to come back to school.

Identified students with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Recording absence as authorised
- Working with the Local Authority PNAR team, to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these students and the school

- Provide home visits where appropriate
- Recognise that some students are not 'available for learning' and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school

Reintegration

The return to school for a student after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a pastoral Support guidance.

The Head of School / Executive Head teacher, will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.

All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.

Programmes may need to be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in school as appropriate.

The success of the Pastoral Support will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the staff email notices / briefings / meetings, by the Head of School.

Child Protection concerns

If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the DSL on the first day of absence, who will decide on appropriate steps.

Attendance plans

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

When a student's attendance falls below 90% the school will decide on the next steps, which may involve a support plan.