



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Date of next policy review</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>Name of person responsible for this policy</b>	<b>Peter Henry</b>
<b>Issued to</b>	<b>Staff, Governors</b>
<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>October 2023</b>

## **Introduction**

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. At Largymore Primary School we strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

### **Mission Statement**

To provide a quality learning and teaching environment that recognises the unique contribution of every individual and challenges all our pupils to achieve their maximum potential.

## **Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Largymore Primary School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

## **Role of the School**

The Principal at Largymore Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers/designated staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her attention. The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting. Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded in the morning registration.

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recordingpupil-absences.htm>

Largymore Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

## **Role of Parent**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability, and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9:00am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record. If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Largymore Primary School strongly discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

Parents should ensure as far as possible that all medical/dental appointments are outside school hours. The school office should be informed of planned appointments that cannot be arranged for outside school hours.

### **Absence Procedures**

If a child will be absent from school, his/her parent/guardian should telephone the office and leave a message before 9:30am on the first morning of absence. If further information is required, school will contact the parent/guardian.

### **Lateness**

The class register is taken at 9.00 am. Pupils arriving after this will be marked as 'Late' with the reason for lateness being recorded. Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at Parent Teacher Interviews and may be referred to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS).

### **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

Non-attendance is an important issue which is treated seriously. Each case, however, is different and school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies will be applied. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep school fully informed of any matters which may affect their child's attendance.

### **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education. If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as 'Authorised' when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian.

Examples may include a family bereavement, hospital internment, or a relevant sporting/musical activity.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as 'Unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the permission of the Principal. Unauthorised Absences are those which school does not consider reasonable and for which authorisation has not been given. The absence must be unavoidable or clearly in the pastoral interest of the child/family. The Principal is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. Authorised Absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school. The following reasons are examples (but not an exhaustive list) of the kinds of absence **that will not be authorised**:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Term-time holidays.
- Persistent non-specific illness, e.g. 'poorly/unwell'.
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill.
- Parental illness (alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school – emergencies excepted)
- Over-sleeping.
- Inadequate clothing/uniform.
- Confusion over school dates.
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons.
- Child's/family birthday.
- Family holidays or day trips during term-time.

### **Leave of Absence/Holiday Absence**

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. Schools have the discretion, in exceptional circumstances, to authorise leave of absence:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or following a crisis.

Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead **MUST** be made in advance of the requested date. Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached on behalf of the Board of Governors.