

# The Leek Federation



## Attendance Policy

### AIMS

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support students and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all students have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable students to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the schools;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

This policy has been devised in consultation with Staff, Governors, Children and Parents.

### BEING AT SCHOOL

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the Federation's staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that our schools have to offer.

As a Federation, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

### EXPECTATIONS

**We expect that all students will:**

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher/tutor or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance.

**We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day

- ensure that they contact the school **daily** on absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

**We expect that the school will:**

- provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- provide a safe learning environment.
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality.
- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.

Examples	Authorised absences:	Unauthorised absences:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• genuine illness of the student;</li> <li>• hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the student;</li> <li>• <b>major religious observances</b></li> <li>• visits to prospective new schools</li> <li>• external exams or educational assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;</li> <li>• a birthday treat;</li> <li>• oversleeping due to a late night;</li> <li>• looking after other children / other family member;</li> <li>• appointments for other family members.</li> </ul>

- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all students.
- make initial enquiries regarding students who are not attending regularly.
- meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Welfare. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.
- Will notify the Local Authority (LA) after 15 days sickness.
- Will notify EWO after 10 days unexplained absence.

## REGISTERS, PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive at school on time. For school students the main playground is supervised from 8.30am and the school doors are open from 8.40am until 8.50am.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every student.
- Registration takes place at 8.50am and students who arrive after 8.55am will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.20am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.15pm.
- Persistent lateness by a student will be dealt with through the home/school link worker and may be referred to Education Welfare.
- Student's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

## STUDENT LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the students are during the school day.

- students are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- students must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- where a student is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the student is allowed to leave the site.
- all students leaving with permission will be given a written authorisation slip by the school in case of being stopped by Truancy Patrol.
- if a student leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the students as a missing person.*

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence **will not** be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the Federation have agreed these, but may be subject to change.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Headteacher's and Governors have determined that:

- in **exceptional circumstances** permission may be granted for a maximum of five days of holiday providing your child has a good (95% or higher) attendance record over the previous three terms.
- where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the Federation Governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the student's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- if leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

## PENALTY NOTICES

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued when a student is stopped by Truancy Patrol or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

### Penalty Notices for Holidays

In accordance with guidance from Staffordshire County Council, holidays during SATS and other external exam periods will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The Headteacher can now request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of school for 5 or more day's holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Penalty notices are issued to **each** parent, for each child.

## TRUANCY PATROL

When a student comes to the notice of a Truancy Patrol, the student's pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there are unauthorised absences in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parent/carers. If there are further unauthorised absences during the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to **each** parent/carers, for each child.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the 3 subsequent weeks, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Again, the Penalty Notice fines are as follows:

- £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Education Welfare can also investigate legal proceeding against parents under section 444 Education Act 1996 or apply to family proceeding court for an ESO to secure regular attendance.

## **FAILURE TO ENSURE REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

The Leek Federation holds regular attendance panels in conjunction with the EWO, any parents whose children are identified as a cause for concern will be invited to attend. If there is no improvement in school attendance the Leek Federation will refer to EWO who work in partnership with school and parents in support of students who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Childs regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officers. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

## **CHANGING SCHOOLS**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform our schools as soon as possible.

A student will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the student will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The student's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Education Welfare.

**ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNORS ON:                      November 2013**

**POLICY REVIEW DATE:                                      November 2015**

# Appendix One

## The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

### Term-time holiday

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently allow Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers’ can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

## The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children’s regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions