

# Attendance Policy

Document Title:	Attendance Policy
Version Number:	2
Policy Status:	Approved
Date of Issue:	September 2024
Date to be Revised:	September 2027

## Revision Log (last 5 changes)

Date	Version No	Brief detail of change
09/24	2	Formatting and amendment to attendance codes
07/25	3	Included further information and clarification from Working Together to Improve School Attendance, August 2024
9/25	4	Inclusion of updated penalty notice information and inclusion of Academy times of the day and links to KCSIE where students are persistently absent
11/25	5	Inclusion of guidance around medical evidence

## **Statement of intent**

1. Leigh Academy Snowfields is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. Snowfields will employ a wide range of strategies to do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as a priority.
2. It is a fundamental part of Leigh Academy Snowfields's ethos to celebrate success and achievement. Excellent attendance and punctuality are integral to a productive and successful education. Parents and carers have a vital role, as well as a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance. Each academy will give high priority to developing effective links and conveying to parents, carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
3. The need to work in partnership with parents and carers is essential and will be the responsibility of Leigh Academy Snowfields to identify, investigate and communicate concerns as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.
4. Leigh Academy Snowfields is committed to promoting race, disability and gender equality within all practices and procedures related to attendance and punctuality.
5. It is only the Principal who can authorise absence.

### **Quick Parental Information**

Snowfields provides the following ways to enable Parents/Carers to effectively communicate absences:

- a. via dedicated telephone recording facility (main school telephone number- 01622 250050)
- b. via the college info@ email address
- c. via text message to Bromcom or through the MCAS app

## **Snowfields Attendance Culture**

Leigh Academy Snowfields recognises that promoting excellent attendance is a whole-school responsibility and should be embedded in every aspect of the school's culture. We encourage a strong attendance ethos through:

- **High Expectations:** Attendance expectations are clearly communicated to students, parents and staff through our home-school agreements, behaviour policies and school communications.
- **Celebration and Recognition:** We celebrate good and improved attendance regularly through assemblies, newsletters, certificates, and postcards.
- **Leadership and Role Modelling:** Senior leaders, tutors and class teachers consistently promote the link between attendance and success, and model punctuality and commitment to learning.
- **Wellbeing Time and PSHE:** Attendance and its impact on learning and wellbeing are regularly discussed during Wellbeing time and personal development lessons. Students are supported to understand the value of education and reflect on their own attendance.
- **Displays and Visibility:** Attendance is promoted across the school through engaging displays on attendance boards.
- **Student Voice:** Our student council, Snowfields Squad, students are regularly consulted on how the school can support good attendance.
- **Linking Attendance to Progress:** Data on attendance is shared with students and families as part of progress data reports. Staff regularly highlight how attendance affects learning outcomes and future opportunities.

## **Snowfields principles**

1. Ensure that all staff are aware of the Roll Call / Registration procedures and receive appropriate professional development with regard to these.
2. Complete Roll Call accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
3. Stress to Parents/Carers the importance of contacting the academy on the first day of absence, and provide effective mechanisms for them to contact the academy.

4. Promote the importance that full attendance and punctuality play in achieving the best possible educational outcomes.
5. Through consultation days and reporting systems, ensure that parents, carers and students are made aware of the attendance pattern and provide an opportunity to discuss how it may affect learning and offer supportive strategies to improve attendance.
6. Work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued.
7. Support students who have difficulty accessing education through the work of the academy support, Trust Attendance Officer and Local authority, Early Help, Schools Liaison Officer/Attendance service.
8. Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.

### **Parents/Carers will**

1. Actively promote and encourage 100% attendance.
2. Contact the school whenever the student is absent on the first day and on each day after, of absence.
3. Provide proof of medical appointments and medical treatment, if required to do so by the academy.
4. Avoid removing their child during the academy day.
5. Apply for permission from the Principals if they want to take their child out of school during term time (an authorised absence.)

Parents will need to apply at least 2 weeks in advance and it will be granted at the discretion of the Principal. It's up to the Principal how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

### **Procedures for recording attendance, absence and punctuality**

2. The statutory recording of attendance and absence at the start of the day and afternoon is known as Roll Call. This is undertaken within the first 30 minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions. Leigh Academy Snowfields day starts at 9:30am for all year groups. Students who arrive after this time will be recorded as late to school (L code). Registers close at 10am, and any lateness after this time is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code), unless a valid reason is communicated.
3. Wherever possible this Roll Call is taken 'electronically' by register.

4. Only designated staff will undertake the recording of attendance and absence. Staff will be reminded of their legal duty to complete and submit Roll Call at the appropriate time using the correct registration codes
5. Parents/Carers and students should be aware of Snowfields times to ensure punctuality. These can be found on the academy website.
6. Registers for Roll Call will officially close 30 minutes after the start of the am/pm session. After this time the students will be registered as late.
7. Parents/Carers of students regularly arriving to school late will be contacted to discuss the matter further.
8. Snowfields provides the following ways to enable Parents/Carers to effectively communicate absences:
  - a. via dedicated telephone recording facility (main school telephone number)
  - b. via the college info@ email address
  - c. via text message to Bromcom or through the MCAS app
9. When a student is sick whilst at the academy Parents/Carers will be contacted to arrange safe collection from the school site.

### **Strategies for improving attendance and punctuality**

1. The named SLT Lead with responsibility for leading attendance within Snowfields will communicate to, and meet regularly with College Pastoral teams and make them aware of significant attendance trends and patterns and seek their support to address any issues with students, parents / carers and other stakeholders.
2. Attendance, punctuality and its impact on learning and progress will be a key area for discussion between tutors, Senior Leadership teams and parents/carers during consultation days.
3. A range of positive strategies will be used to reward individual students and groups for outstanding and/or improved attendance, these include personalised rewards, certificates and postcards.
4. Regular attendance meetings will be held between Leigh Academy Snowfields and the Trust Attendance Officer.
5. Student attendance data may be shared with Parents/Carers, Local Authority, Early Help, School Liaison Officer/Attendance Service, Children's Social Services, Police,

relevant LEA's, Ofsted and the DfE. These are made to ensure students and families are provided with support and comply with safeguarding requirements.

6. A student is deemed to be a PA (Persistent Absentee) if their attendance falls below 90%. Snowfields may consider students below 95% at risk. Students who fall into either of these categories, will be monitored by the academy attendance teams and the Trust Attendance Officer. Where students have evidence of a medical diagnosis of Anxiety Based School Avoidance, a personalised Wellbeing plan will be put in place.
7. Analysis of trends and attendance by micro population should identify strengths and areas for intervention to further improve attendance.
8. A referral may be made to the local authority attendance service should attendance remain poor after academy and Trust interventions.

### **Escalation Procedures and Tiered Approach**

- **Wave 1 Action: At Risk of low attendance: Under 95%**
  - Student Service Managers (SSMs) will reach out to discuss attendance concerns, including support that can be offered for any barriers to attendance.
  - Formal Attendance letter sent to express concerns with attendance level.
  
- **Wave 2 Action: Persistent Absentee: Under 90%**
  - Formal Attendance letter sent inviting parents/carers to an Attendance meeting with SSM
  - External agency involvement will be discussed to provide support
  - Academy Non-Attendance Risk Assessment completed
  
- **Wave 3 Action: Under 80%**
  - Formal Attendance letter sent with invite to School Attendance Meeting held with College Assistant Principal and SSM to put Attendance Improvement Plan in place to review strategies and discuss any further support which can be provided through external agencies
  - Academy Non-Attendance Risk Assessment completed to reassess risk with decrease in attendance, which could trigger further external agency involvement
  
- **Wave 4 Action: Severe Absentee: Under 50%**
  - Formal Attendance letter sent by Trust Attendance Officer to review the Attendance Improvement Plan during a meeting held with the Trust Attendance Officer, Head of College (Vice Principal) and SSM.

- Academy Non-Attendance Risk Assessment completed to reassess risk with decrease in attendance, which could trigger further external agency involvement
  
- **Wave 5 Action: Non-attendance over a module where no further active investigation into factors are taking place**
  - Final review of Attendance Improvement Plan and Non-attendance Risk Assessment consider any final strategies or support that can be sought
  - Consider application for change of placement due to being unable to meet students needs

N.B. Where a student is not attending the academy, weekly virtual safeguarding calls will take place to ensure the young people on roll with us are safe, and to offer any support to our families. This is aligned with paragraph 177 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2025, and the Leigh Academy Snowfields Safeguarding Policy.

## **Absence during term time**

1. Snowfields may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. These could include: service personnel returning from tour of duty, absence recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or the child's rehabilitation, the death or terminal illness of a person close to the family, to attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family, or other reasonable requests for absence at the discretion of the Principal. (Ref KCC Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct, effective from April 2017, Medway Council Code of Practice dated 1st September 2014, Royal Borough of Greenwich unauthorised absence code).
2. Applications for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Snowfields Principal. The Principal will make the decision of acceptance or refusal. Snowfields can consider the student's previous record of attendance and take this into account
3. If absence is not authorised and the leave of absence of at least 10 sessions (5 days) is taken, a referral will be made to the local authority attendance service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of the academy.

## **Medical Guidance**

1. If a child is unable to attend school full-time due to health needs, the medical evidence required generally centers on two main goals:
  - **Authorising Absences:** To verify the absence is for medical reasons.
  - **Adjusting Provision:** To establish that a child is medically unfit for full-time school and requires a reduced schedule, adjustments.

The strength and detail of the evidence will depend on whether the health issue is short-term or a complex, long-term condition.

2. Here is a breakdown of what constitutes acceptable medical evidence in this context:

### **a. For Short-Term or Intermittent Illness (Authorising Absence)**

For minor, short-term illnesses (up to one week), parental notification that a child is too ill to attend is usually sufficient.

However, where illness absence is frequent or extends beyond one week, Leigh Academy Snowfields requires evidence to authorise absence, which can include:

- **Appointment Cards/Prescriptions:** Evidence of recent medical contact, such as an appointment card for a clinic visit, or a copy of a prescription showing medication related to the current absence.
- **Hospital Discharge Letters:** Documentation provided after a hospital visit or overnight stay.

## **b. For Long-Term/Complex Conditions (Requiring a Reduced Schedule)**

If a child needs a reduced timetable (a "part-time timetable") because they are medically unable to cope with full-time attendance for a short period of time, the medical evidence needs to be much more robust.

The strongest evidence for this purpose includes:

### **i). Specialist Medical Reports**

- **Letter from a Consultant or Specialist:** This is often the most important document. It should come from the specialist treating the condition within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., paediatrician, psychiatrist, neurologist, etc.) and be dated.
  - **Crucial Content:** The letter must clearly explain the diagnosis, the treatment plan, and **specifically outline how the condition impacts the child's ability to attend school full-time** (e.g., "chronic fatigue limits concentration to two hours per day," or "the emotional impact of treatment requires rest periods and limits school attendance to mornings only").
  - **Recommended Timeframe:** It should suggest a specific, time-limited plan for the reduced schedule (e.g., "A phased return over six weeks, starting at 10 hours per week"). **A reduced schedule should generally not be indefinite.**

### **ii). Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) created with Healthcare Professionals.**

- This is a detailed document created collaboratively by the school, the parents, and **healthcare professionals.**
- **Crucial Content:** It formally sets out the child's medical needs, the support required in school (e.g., medication, access to a quiet room, adjustments to physical education), and often includes a clear plan for what to do if the child becomes unwell or needs to leave school early, effectively justifying the reduced timetable.

### **iii). Other Professional Guidance**

- **Occupational Health or School Health Reports:** Reports from a School Nurse, Educational Psychologist, or Occupational Therapist who has assessed the child's functional capacity and learning environment.

- **Mental Health Documentation:** For mental health reasons like severe anxiety or school refusal, a letter from a GP, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), or a qualified mental health practitioner could be considered.

### **Reduced Timetables**

1. Leigh Academy Snowfields recognises that all pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is demonstrably in a pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable may be implemented to meet their individual needs.
2. This approach should primarily support a pupil in accessing as much education as possible, for example, when a medical condition prevents full-time attendance.
3. Leigh Academy Snowfields will consider a reduced timetable in the following circumstances:
  - a. As part of a *Reintegration*, this can be used for students who are new to the academy, or those who are reintegrating back into the academy following prolonged periods of challenging behaviour or illness.
  - b. For *Health* reasons, when a medical condition prevents full-time attendance. Medical evidence must be provided for this to be considered.
4. Part-time timetables are never used as a behaviour management tool.
5. Any such timetable must be agreed upon by both the school and the parent, have a clear ambition, form part of the pupil's wider support or reintegration plan, and include regular review dates involving the pupil and parents to ensure it is in place for the shortest necessary time.
6. While a proposed end date should be set, extensions can be made through the review process, especially for pupils with long-term health conditions who may require prolonged part-time attendance.
7. When a reduced timetable is agreed, absences should be recorded using the appropriate codes, typically C2.
8. When a student remains on a reduced timetable, despite consistent and documented reviews, and we haven't been able to increase their hours, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Leigh Academy Snowfields will meet with parents and carers. Our goal in these discussions is to jointly assess whether continued placement at the Academy remains the most suitable full-time educational provision for the student. We'll explore

all available options to ensure the student receives the appropriate education they are entitled to.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

1. Snowfield's attendance data will be published for consideration at every academy board meeting and module reviews, as requested. It may also be submitted to the Trust Academies Standards Committee, as required.
2. The Principal has responsibility for the attendance figures and actions to improve attendance within Snowfields.
3. Attendance Data will be produced regularly and distributed to the senior leadership team to enable interventions to occur.
4. A designated senior leader has overall responsibility for the publication and monitoring of the attendance data for the whole academy.
5. Attendance data will be collected via the DfE Census three times per annum.

### **Penalty notices**

1. Currently local authorities have different penalty notice codes. This is likely to be streamlined nationally in the near future.
2. Leigh Academies Trust academies are under the auspices of Kent County Council, Medway Council and Royal Borough of Greenwich.
3. In line with KCC Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct, Medway Council Code of Practice and Royal Borough of Greenwich Unauthorised Absences Code, academies follow set procedures for issuing penalty notices.
4. Local authority Attendance Services take responsibility for issuing Penalty notices and taking other legal actions following referral by the academy.

### **Circumstances where a penalty notice may be issued**

1. Unauthorised absence: where 10 marks (5 full days) of absence have been recorded. Penalty notices are £80 if paid within 21 days of being issued, but rise to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

- a. If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be charged at a flat rate of £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.
  - b. If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years alternative action will be taken. At the third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent, per child.
2. A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence.
3. Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent. For example, if two adults take two children out of school, the total fines would be £640 (reduced to £320 for a first offence paid within 21 days).
4. If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court
5. Parents/Carers and students are supported by the academy and local authority to overcome barriers to regular attendance.
6. Sanctions of any nature are used where parental cooperation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem.
7. A penalty notice can only be issued as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that its use will secure improvement.
8. A penalty notice can only be issued where a student has been absent or late for a period/periods of time and the absence or lateness has not been authorised by the academy.
9. After the academy has taken steps to resolve attendance concerns/warned the parent/carer of a possible Penalty Notice referral, the academy will refer directly to the relevant local authority, to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence:
  - a. absent for 10 or more half day sessions without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions (these do not need to be consecutive) persistently late for up to 10 sessions after register has closed (15 minutes).
  - b. unless the issuing of the Penalty notice in these circumstances would conflict with other interventions in place such as Early Help.

## **Suspension**

1. A penalty notice can only be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours of days 1-5 of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.
2. Where penalty notices are imposed, local authority regulations will apply. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the local authority.

## **Removing a pupil from roll**

1. As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, when all possible actions have been taken the Academy may remove the student from academy roll due to continued serious absence.
2. For Children with special needs, an academy must not remove a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan from roll without permission from the relevant local authority or a directive to do so from the Secretary of State unless the pupil has died or been excluded.
3. The LAT Attendance Team will NOT make the decision to remove however ETI will, if required, support in reviewing final documentation before the academy attendance lead presents to the Principal for approval.

## Code description

### Statutory Attendance Codes

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school

### Absence Codes (authorised and unauthorised)

Code	Definition
<i>Authorised absence</i>	
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
<i>Unauthorised absence</i>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established

O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

Code	Definition
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Administrative codes

Code	Definition
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure