Attendance Policy for Years 7 to 11

Date adopted: September 2025

Date reviewed: September 2026

Date to be reviewed: September 2027

1. General Statement of aims
2. Legislation and guidance
3. Roles and responsibilities
4. Recording attendance
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence
6. Recognising good attendance
7. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school
8. Attendance Monitoring
9. Links with other policies
10. Appendix One – Attendance Codes

1. General statement of aims:

- Lawnswood School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full-time education which maximizes opportunities for each student to realise their true potential. Good attendance leads to high attainment.

- All school staff will work with students and their families to help ensure that parents perform their legal duty in ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Everyone who works at Lawnswood has a responsibility for attendance in their various roles, pastoral or otherwise.

- Lawnswood School will encourage attendance by providing a welcoming, caring environment, wherein each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

- Lawnswood School will maintain an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the success and efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

- To meet these objectives, Lawnswood School will act early to address patterns of absence maintaining an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on 'Working together to improve schools attendance' and 'school attendance parental responsibility measures'. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Working together to improve school attendance 2024
- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence and severely absent threshold.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The governing body appoints a link governor who meets regularly with the Deputy Headteacher who oversees attendance.

3.2 The headteacher / deputy headteacher

The headteacher / deputy headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents/carers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a student's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of students who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
    - Providing the local authority with the details of students who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion at Lawnswood School is Martin Truscott, Deputy Headteacher and can be contacted via the school office on 0113 284 4020.

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Promote and reward good attendance to school
- Ensure staff know that attendance is everyone's responsibility
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff and have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school.
- Have an oversight of all available data and regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Making sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced
- Ensuring intervention reintegration plans are created in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students and communicate these regularly to students and parents through all available channels

3.4 The attendance improvement officer

The attendance improvement officer for Lawnswood School is Kate Houston and can be contacted via the school office 0113 284 4020.

The school attendance improvement officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the deputy headteacher
- Works with year managers to tackle persistent and severely absent students
- Works with the local authority to tackle persistent and severely absent students
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Where appropriate works with families to put attendance contracts in place
- Advises the deputy headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 The year manager

The year manager is responsible for:

- Overseeing attendance in their year group
- Ensure that first day phone calls for their year group are completed in liaison with the Pastoral Support Worker for their year group and the attendance admin.
- Attend daily attendance meetings to discuss absence in their year group
- Works with the attendance improvement officer to identify patterns of absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Sends communication to families regarding attendance
- Liaise with form tutors regarding attendance in their form
- Supports individual students to improve attendance

3.6 The pastoral support worker

The pastoral support worker works with their year manager to support daily phone calls to families and providing intervention to support students attendance to school.

3.7 Form Tutor

Form tutors are responsible for monitoring attendance in their form, recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and when required contacting home.

3.8 Subject Teacher

The attendance of every lesson in school is recorded by a subject teacher at the start of each lesson on SIMs using the appropriate code.

3.9 Attendance Admin

Attendance administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They are also responsible for first day phone calls.

3.10 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with an looks after them)

At Lawnswood we expect parents/carers to:

- Encourage their children to attend school daily and be punctual and inform the school immediately if their child is absent or unavoidably late

- Inform the school each and every day of a student's absence before 8.15am via Classcharts or by telephone
- Inform the school (via Classcharts, telephone call or toolkit) in advance of any hospital appointment unavoidably scheduled during school time
- Inform the school of any problems which might affect their child's attendance
- Cooperate with the school if their child's attendance/punctuality is unsatisfactory
- Make requests for special leave of absence for their child during term time by completing an Application for Leave in Exceptional Circumstances form which is available on the school's website or from Student Reception.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact for their child
- Ensure that where possible all appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting their child's Head of Year or Year Manager via the school office.

3.11 Students

At Lawnswood we expect that students will:

- Always attend school unless prevented by a specified illness or unavoidable circumstances
- Always arrive to school by 8.25am
- Attend all lessons on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic school attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date the student leaves school.
Students must arrive in school by 8.25am on each school day.
The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9am. Students who are on a reduced timetable will be according to their start time. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.05pm and will be kept open until 12.35pm.

Where a student has been absent for 15 consecutive or cumulative day through illness we will notify the Local Authority. Where a student is absent for 20 school days we will refer to the Leeds City Council Child Missing in Education Team and both Lawnswood School and Leeds City Council will decide if the student is to be removed from roll.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

If students are ill, our preferred method of contact is reporting it via classcharts or alternatively parents must phone school the school attendance line on 01132844033 to explain their child's absence on day one, including the reason for absence and expected date of return. Parents must make contact on each day of absence, this is to ensure that a child is not returning early from an absence without the school knowing. All illnesses should be specified. It is not sufficient to report a child as 'ill': the nature of the illness must be given in order for the absence to be approved by the school.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Students should bring evidence of the appointment to their form tutor.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise. To apply for absence during term time please contact the school office for a form which is then returned to the Headteacher.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using a code L
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using a code U.

The code U is an absence and our usual absence procedures will be followed. Students who are persistently late will be expected to catch up work after school with their year team. Parents will be notified.

We will proactively work with students who are persistently late to help identify the reason and put in place support to improve their punctuality. Students who continue to be late with no good reason will be placed into a lunchtime reflection.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting home on the first day of absence
- Conduct a home visit on day 3 if no contact has been made with the family
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents/carers along with the students report.

Students whose attendance causes concern will be contacted by their Year Team to offer support and identify any barriers to attendance.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable such as a death or funeral of an immediate family member or a housing crisis. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the student must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.
In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the student attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Recognising Good Attendance

At Lawnswood we recognise that good attendance leads to better outcomes. We will encourage students to attend school regularly by celebrating their attendance throughout the year in the form of certificates and rewards.

7. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

7.1 Students absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where a student has complex barriers to attendance we will endeavour to support them the best way that we can. We encourage families to work with us to support their child. We can offer a range of bespoke strategies tailored to individual student needs. We will;

- Work with the family and student to identify the barriers to attending school by meeting them in their family home, school or a neutral venue
- Put in strategies to try and support improved attendance for example, use of our Hub provision, reasonable adjustments to timetables, changes to timetables in school, reduced timetables (for a limited time), key adults to talk to in school, safe places to go.
- Seek the support of other schools where appropriate, for example using an Off Site Direction.
- Involve external support where required, for example the local authorities pupil tuition team or the North West Area Inclusion Partnership.
- Make referrals where needed to our school counsellor or family support worker.

7.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a student is absent due to SEND or mental or physical ill health we will:

- Work the family and student to support them in the best way that we can identifying ways in which can support.
- Our pastoral and SEND teams will work to support the student. Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate for example having a lift pass, working in our Hub provision or making referrals to the Medical Needs Teaching Service.
- Make referrals where needed to our school counsellor or family support worker.

Where a student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

7.3 Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a student has been absent for some time, we will look to support them with a phased return to school. We will work with the student and family to identify a timetable that supports them.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The attendance team, consisting of our attendance improvement officer, year teams and attendance admin monitors student absence on a daily basis to identify patterns of absences that maybe cause for concern.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

Lawnswood School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

Lawnswood School will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to form tutors, to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the governing board and school leaders
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

Lawnswood School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2 above)

The local authority has the power to view school registers at any time via a secure connection. Student-level absence data will be collected daily and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and Relationship policy

11. Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
Attendance		
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience.
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Attending education provision	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority, other than the school they are registered at
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student takes place in a regulated performance.

C2	Leave of absence for a part-time timetable	Student is on a part-time timetable which is reviewed regularly
E	Suspended	Student has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness, not medical or dental appointments
J I	Interview	Attending an interview for employment, or another educational institution
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Leave of absence for study	Student is studying for a public examination
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
Absence – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	The local authority arrangements for students to access school have failed.
X	Non-compulsory school age student not required to attend school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Student is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the student by the school or local authority is not available.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the student is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	The school is closed due to adverse weather
Y5	Unable to attend as the student is in criminal justice detention	The student is remanded in custody, or in youth detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Student is not able to attend due to infectious or transmissible diseases
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the student from attending the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Administrative Codes		
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day