

Langley Grammar School

Student Attendance Policy

September 2021



1. Introduction

The Governors and staff of Langley Grammar School believe that it is vitally important that students attend school at all times.

We are committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all of our students and believe that attending every session contributes significantly to students making consistent progress in their school work. We therefore expect a high level of attendance and punctuality from all of our students in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'Parent' refers to either a parent or main designated carer.

The DfE no longer expect schools to set targets for attendance. However, they do require schools to monitor all absence, and Governing Bodies are free to set their own attendance targets.

2. Why regular attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Students can only benefit from and make the most of their educational opportunities if they attend school regularly and on time. Ninety percent (90%) attendance may sound acceptable, however it is not and would mean that a student misses:

*One half day each week;
Nearly four weeks every school year;
Over one school year in a school career.*

3. The Law

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that children between the ages of 5-16 should attend school regularly. The school must keep two registers: an admission register, which serves as the school roll, and an attendance register.

Attendance registers must be called twice a day: at the start of the day in the morning and during the afternoon session. The register must show whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity, off-site or absent. When a student is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.

Each register is a legal document and it is the responsibility of staff to take or mark registers accurately. It is a student's responsibility to ensure they receive an attendance mark. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child attends the school regularly and on time.

4. Persistent Absence

A student is deemed to be a **persistent absentee** (PA) when they miss 10% or more of their potential attendance across the school year; for whatever reason. Absence at this level is likely to do considerable damage to a student's educational achievement. All absence is monitored and parents will be notified if their son or daughter is identified as potentially 'on track' to becoming a persistent absentee. The School works with the parents of any student in this category to encourage and support them towards a higher attendance rate.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Every half-day (equivalent to one session) absence from school has to be classified as either '**Authorised**' or '**Unauthorised**'. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from the parent, usually in writing.

'**Unauthorised absence**' is where the school has not given approval in advance or has not accepted an explanation offered afterwards. **Only the school can authorise absence.** Parents should contact the school as early as possible to explain why their child needs to be absent and to obtain permission.

By **not** authorising an absence, Langley Grammar School is stating that either a reason has not been provided, or the reason provided is not acceptable.

Absences that the school does **not** consider reasonable include but are not limited to:

- visiting relatives within term time
- shopping
- birthdays
- looking after siblings
- **routine** medical/dental appointments (unless unavoidable)
- holidays
- unofficial "study leave" to prepare for public examinations
- sitting public examinations for which the school has not prepared the student, or which the school has not supported

6. Requests for Leave of Absence

Under education law, parents do **not** have an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents are expected to arrange their family holidays during those times.

Parents who request leave for their son or daughter during term time must do so in advance by completing and returning a '**Leave of Absence Request**' form which can be found on the school website. Requests for leave of absence for family holidays, in line with government guidelines, will normally not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Leave of absence should be requested **at least two weeks in advance**. Any short notice request for leave of absence involving travel abroad must be accompanied proof of the purchase date of travel documents, before an appropriate decision can be made. The parent will be advised of the school's decision in writing.

If the leave of absence request is denied and the student is absent during the requested period, the parent may be liable to receive a fixed penalty notice of £60 from the Local Authority. Penalty notices are issued on a 'per parent per student' basis. Prolonged periods of reported illness within two weeks of a school holiday will automatically require medical evidence.

If attendance or punctuality is a concern, parents will be contacted and further action may be taken. If parents wish to make an appeal against a decision, they should write to the Headteacher explaining their concern.

7. Absence for Days of Religious Observance

Students at Langley Grammar School come from a wide range of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. The school will authorise absence for days of religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.

Only absence on the day of religious observance itself will be authorised and parents should request any absence **in advance and in writing**. Where necessary the school will seek advice from representatives of the faith community to establish whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

8. Attendance in the Sixth Form

In the Sixth Form, evidence shows that good attendance is crucial for high achievement. At Langley Grammar School, it is expected that all Sixth Form students maintain at least 95% attendance. If attendance falls below 90% this is investigated and closely monitored in order to identify any underlying issue. Support, both for the student and parents, is also provided to improve the level of attendance...

It is acknowledged that there are a number of approved educational activities linked to higher education which are crucial in the preparation for university and pathways beyond Langley Grammar School. Students would be expected to discuss with relevant staff any visits or interviews with potential employers and universities and seek leave of absence rather than simply not attending school.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Governing Board** will:

- Monitor and review levels of student attendance.
- Review implementation of this policy

The **Headteacher** will:

- Give the importance of good attendance a high profile with student, staff and parents;
- Take overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy;
- Ensure that regular reports on student attendance are provided for the Governing Board.

The **Deputy/Assistant Headteacher(s)** with responsibility for attendance will:

- Take day-to-day responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy;
- Report on attendance regularly at Senior Leadership Team meetings.

Phase Leaders will:

- Support the Deputy/Assistant Headteacher(s) in giving attendance a high priority;
- Ensure that attendance procedures are followed across their Phases;
- Support the Student Support team in reviewing data, setting targets and action planning;
- Ensure regular liaison with the Student Support team to ensure procedures are being followed for students with continued low attendance;
- Ensure that students on long term sickness absence are able to access the curriculum and are supported on their return.

Form Tutors will:

- Complete all registers accurately and in a timely fashion;
- Ensure that students return any absence queries as soon as practical;
- Look for absence patterns on a regular basis and alert Phase Leaders if necessary.

The **Student Support Team** will:

- Monitor registers daily;
- Make use of the texting facility 'provided by the SIMS InTouch system to alert parents to absence that requires explanation;
- Make first-day phone calls to parents of students with unexplained absence;
- Mark each student's register with the appropriate code and forward information as necessary;
- Send appropriate letters to parents according to the agreed protocol;
- Provide weekly attendance data to Phase Leaders to discuss identified patterns or unusual absence;
- Engage with parents/carers and remind them of the requirements set out in the Attendance Policy.

We expect **Students** to:

- Arrive on site by 8.20 am each school day;
- Attend registration and assembly on time;
- Attend all lessons on time.
- Provide letters or other relevant information that explains any absence

We expect **Parents** to:

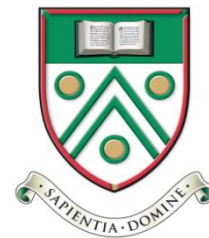
- Contact the school on the first day of absence and, if possible, indicate the day of return;
- Confirm the reason for any absence in writing upon their student's return to school;
- Make **routine** medical/dental appointments out of the normal school day or out of term time;
- Arrange for holidays to be taken out of term time;
- Make requests for authorisation of unavoidable absence at least 10 working days in advance;
- Provide any further evidence for absence on request;
- Attend meetings about their son or daughter's attendance and support Langley Grammar School in responding to concerns regarding attendance.

10. Ratification and review dates

The implementation of this policy will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors' Student and Community Committee. The policy itself will be reviewed and approved in line with the LGS Policy Framework agreed by the Governing Board.

Policy approved by:	September 2021	Headteacher
Review date:	June 2023	Student & Community Committee

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST



Student Name	
Form Group	

Absence Dates

From:		To:	
Date of student's return to school:			
Number of school days involved:			

Reason for Absence

Include an explanation as to why this absence has to be taken in term time

<i>Any short notice requests for Leave of Absence must be accompanied by the proof of purchase date of travel documents before an appropriate decision can be made</i>

Under education law, parents do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parent/carers to book their family holidays during those times.

Requests for leave of absence, in line with government guidelines, will normally not be authorised. Parent/Carers who request leave during term time for their child must do so in advance by completing this Leave of Absence Request form for Authorised absence. Leave of absence should be requested at least two weeks in advance. Any short notice request for Leave of Absence must be accompanied by proof of purchase date of travel documents before an appropriate decision can be made. The parent/carer will be advised of Langley Grammar School's decision in writing. **If the Leave of Absence Request is denied and the student is absent during the requested period the parent carer may be liable to receive a fixed penalty notice of £60 from the Local Authority.** Penalty notices are issued on a per parent per child basis.

Please return this form in person to Mr Cook, Assistant Headteacher, for consideration.

The Headteacher's decision is final

Parent/carer name _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

For school use only: Request received _____ Approved YES / NO Acknowledgement sent: _____
