



Student Attendance Policy November 2024

1. Introduction and rationale

The Governors and staff of Langley Grammar School 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 academic development.

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.

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 or carers to ensure that this is achieved.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#), and the [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#) effective from August 2024. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Education Act 1996 (Part 6)
- Education Act 2002 (Part 3)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Part 7)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

3. School attendance and the law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education. The Education Act 1996 states that parents must ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive appropriate full-time education according to their age, ability and aptitude. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school (ie home education).

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

A parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly. If the parent *knows* that their child is not attending, they may be prosecuted for a more serious offence. Failure to ensure school attendance can result in prosecution.

The Education Act 1996 also makes it clear that any person who has care of a child – whether or not they are the parent – or who has parental responsibility, is deemed to be 'a parent' and is therefore responsible for ensuring regular school attendance.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach the age of 16. They must then do one of the following until they are 18:

- stay in full-time education,
- start an apprenticeship, or
- spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

3. Recording attendance

a) Attendance register

By law, the school must maintain 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. On each occasion they must record whether each registered student is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes.

Registers are legal records and it is the responsibility of staff to take or mark registers accurately. Schools must preserve every entry in the attendance register for 6 years from the date the data was entered.

b) Opening and closing registers

The school day starts at 8.20am and ends at 3.15pm. Students must arrive in school by 8.20am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken as soon as possible after 8.20am and will be kept open until 8.50am. The register for the second session will be taken at the start of period 5.

c) Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school of the reason for a student's absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school on 01753598300 and selecting the relevant option or by emailing studentsupport@lgs.slough.sch.uk

Absence due to physical or mental illness will be recorded 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. Medical evidence will not be requested unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of an illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified accordingly.

d) Planned absence

Attendance at a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the school has been notified in advance of the appointment. We encourage parents 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.

Parents must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible. Further details about which term-time absences the school can authorise, and how to make a request, and given in section 5 of this policy.

e) Lateness and punctuality

Students are expected to arrive in school by 8.15am, and will be regarded as late if they arrive after 8.20am.

A student who arrives late:

- **Before** the register has closed will be marked as **late**, using the appropriate code
- **After** the register has closed will be marked as unauthorised absence, using the U code

The school accepts that students may occasionally be late to school through no fault of their own. Reasons for lateness will be recorded and students will not be penalised where the reason is acceptable.

f) Following up unexplained absence

Where any student expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If there is no response then the school will proceed to the next step below.
- Call the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may refer the absence to the Safeguarding team.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not, and the correct attendance code to use. This will be recorded as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the student was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer or other external agencies
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to any external agencies involved in supporting the student.

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.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Parents should contact the school as early as possible to explain why their child needs to be absent and to obtain permission. **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.** By not authorising an absence, the school is stating that either a reason has not been provided, or that the reason provided is not reasonable or acceptable.

The school will allow students to be absent from school for certain approved educational or sporting activities, to attend other schools or settings, or to attend work experience agreed with the school.

Reasons for absence that the school does **not** consider reasonable include, but are not limited to:

- visiting or entertaining 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

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

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, and must therefore request leave of absence.

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 to prepare for public examinations entered through the school
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, or unforeseen events that justify a student's need for time away from school. Leave of absence requests under exceptional circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure minimal disruption to a student's education while being sensitive to unique situations that may warrant temporary absence.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is highly unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. 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 child 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 will 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. The school will not authorise any leave of absence where the request is made retrospectively or during the absence itself unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If a leave of absence request is declined but the student is subsequently absent during the requested period, the parent may be liable to receive a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority. Prolonged periods of reported illness within the first two weeks after a school holiday will automatically require medical evidence.

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** (this can include email). 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. Sanctions for unauthorised absence

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

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)
- a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Penalty notices are issued on a 'per pupil, per parent' basis. This means that **each** parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

Penalty notice payments 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. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £160 within 28 days. This is reduced to £80 if payment is made within 21 days.

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

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement, intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are issued but they are not changing behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Only 2 penalty notices can therefore be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate. 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.

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 Slough local authority area.

9. Attendance monitoring

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level.

Specific student information will be shared with the DfE on request. The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement. Information on attendance levels and trends will be provided to the Governing Board at regular intervals.

10. 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 a student is identified as potentially 'on track' to becoming a persistent absentee. The school will work with the parents of any student in this category to encourage and support them towards a higher attendance rate.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. These children are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

School staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents. They should also work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

Some children face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include children who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students should be the same as it is for any other but additional support may need to be provided.

11. 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 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.

12. Promoting good attendance

In cases of ongoing attendance concerns, our school, in partnership with the local authority, may propose an **Attendance Contract**. This contract is a supportive agreement involving the student, family, and school staff, which outlines clear attendance targets and details the specific support the school will provide to help meet these goals. It is usually considered after repeated absences and is aimed at working collaboratively with families to improve attendance patterns.

We understand that returning to school after a long absence can be challenging for students and we offer the following tailored approach to aid a smooth transition:

- For students returning after an extended absence, we may offer a phased return, reduced timetable, or individualised academic adjustments to help them ease back into school life.
- Students are supported by a designated staff member who provides support and guidance during their transition.
- After reintegration, the student's progress and well-being are closely monitored through regular check-ins, offering the opportunity to provide additional support if challenges arise.
- Parents will be involved throughout the process to ensure the school and parents work together in the best interests of the child.

We recognise that some students face complex, multi-faceted barriers to regular attendance and we are committed to working with families and external agencies to provide support.

For students who cannot attend school due to mental or physical ill health or their individual need (SEND), the school works with families to determine the best ways to support the student's unique needs. Where required the school is committed to providing flexible adjustments to meet individual needs and engaging with external agencies to overcome barriers.

12. Roles and responsibilities

The **Governing Board** is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations and promoting the importance of good attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Ensuring that the school's statutory duties are fulfilled in relation to recording and sharing attendance information.
- Reviewing and challenging attendance data and working with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team to set goals or areas of focus for attendance.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school.
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students, staff and parents.
- Ensuring that the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, prioritising staff and resources so that consistent support is provided for students who need it most.
- Ensure that regular reports on student attendance are provided for the Governing Board.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Authorising the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The **Designated Senior Leader** with responsibility for attendance (the 'senior attendance champion') is responsible for:

- Day-to-day implementation and monitoring of the policy
- Championing attendance and punctuality across the school, setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families to improve attendance.
- Working with the Individual Needs Coordinator and the parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance.
- Communicating with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care plan (EHPC) has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs
- Regularly monitoring, analysis and evaluation of attendance and absence data.
- Providing regular reports on attendance at Senior Leadership Team meetings.

Phase Leaders are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance and punctuality within their phase;
- Ensuring that attendance procedures are followed by form tutors across their Phases;
- Supporting the Student Support team in reviewing data, setting targets and action planning;
- Building close, productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Ensuring regular liaison with the Student Support team to ensure procedures are being followed for students with continued low attendance;
- Ensuring that students on long term sickness absence are able to access the curriculum and are supported on their return.

Teaching Staff are responsible for:

- Completing registration and lesson registers accurately and in a timely fashion;
- Looking for absence patterns from lessons or registration times on a regular basis and alerting Phase Leaders if necessary.

The **Student Support Team** is responsible for:

- Monitoring registers daily;
- Alerting 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 regular attendance data to Phase Leaders and the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, reporting concerns and identifying patterns or unusual absence
- Engage with parents/carers to remind them of the requirements of this Attendance Policy.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

We expect **Students** to:

- Arrive on site by 8.20 am each school day;
- Attend registration and assemblies on time;
- Attend all lessons on time.
- Pass letters or other relevant information that explains any absence to Student Support.

We expect **Parents** to:

- Make sure their child attends every [day/timetabled session] on time
- Provide the school with three emergency contact numbers for their child
- Contact the school before 8.30am on the first day of absence and, if possible, indicate the day of return;
- 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 school days in advance;
- Provide any further evidence for absence on request;
- Support school staff in responding to concerns regarding attendance.

Please note, medical evidence may be required if your child has accumulated a number of absences.

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, all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person, and all those who have day-to-day responsibility for a child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

13. Monitoring and evaluation

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will undertake systematic monitoring and review of the Attendance policy and procedures.

The implementation and impact of this policy will also be reviewed by the Governing Board through the Governors' Staff, Student and Community Committee.

The policy will normally be reviewed every two years in line with the LGS Policy Framework, or in response to any changes in the relevant guidance from the Department for Education.

Policy approval

This policy will be reviewed and approved in line with the LGS Policy Framework approved by the Governing Board in July 2023.

Reviewed by	Deputy Headteacher Student Support Manager	Oct 2024
Approved by	Headteacher	Nov 2024
Next Review		July 2025

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any 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
Absent - leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer or educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent - other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every Student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent - unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes

O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective Student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Request

Langley Grammar School



Student Leave of Absence Request

Under education law, parents do **not** have an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. Parent/Carers who wish to request leave during term time for their child must do so in advance by completing this Leave of Absence Request form. Leave of absence should normally be requested **at least two weeks** in advance.

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 for family holidays, in line with government guidelines, will normally not be authorised.

Any short notice request for Leave of Absence must be accompanied by proof of the 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. **The Headteacher's decision is final.** 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 from the Local Authority.

Student Name		Form Group	
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Absence Dates			
From		To:	
Date of student's return to school:			
Number of school days involved:			

Reason for Absence <i>Please include an explanation as to why this absence has to be taken in term time</i>			
<i>Any short notice requests for Leave of Absence must be accompanied by proof of the purchase date of travel documents before an appropriate decision can be made.</i>			
Parent/carer name			
Signature		Date:	

Please return this form to Student Support for consideration.

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