



The Federation of Bishop Sutton and Stanton Drew Primary Schools



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New Lighthouse Schools' Partnership Attendance Policy

Dear parents and carers,

As Mr Cook mentioned in an earlier newsletter, governors have agreed to adopt the new LSP Attendance Policy to come into effect in both our schools from 1st January 2023. The whole document is available on the website but is 27 pages long with an additional 36 pages of appendices. The main parts you need to be aware of are summarised below:

- We are committed to providing a high quality and inclusive education for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is crucial.
- New attendance policy is from Lighthouse Schools' Partnership.
- The expected attendance level for schools across the Trust is 100%. However, we recognise that children do occasionally get ill, therefore the Trust is concerned about any attendance below 96%. Children with an attendance level below 90% are considered 'persistent absentees'.
- Each school manages attendance and it is monitored by the Trust.
- The school day starts at 8.55 Bishop Sutton and 9.00 Stanton Drew.
- Unless for a valid reason, such as a medical appointment, if a pupil arrives after the close of registration (9.15 Bishop Sutton 9.20 Stanton Drew) that morning session will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Medical/dental appointments should be made out of school hours wherever possible. It is not acceptable for a pupil to miss a whole day for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is. Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments, unless it is an emergency appointment. Parents/carers will be asked to provide the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter if there are concerns over attendance.

Notification of absence

- Parents/carers are expected to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence on each day of absence.
- If a pupil is absent due to illness or any other reason, parents/carers should notify the school of the absence as early as possible. This should be before 8.45a.m. on the day of absence and include the specific reason.
- Full reason (e.g. description of symptoms) for pupil absence should be given. Reporting a pupil as 'not well' or 'ill' does not constitute a full reason.
- Parents/carers can notify the school by phone. If parents/carers are able to leave a voice message it must include the pupil's full name and year group or class. Parents/carers can also notify the school by email or by a personal visit to the School Office (via an adult.)
- If a pupil is absent due to illness which lasts more than one day, the parent/carer should contact the school each day to provide an update, unless otherwise agreed by the school.
- Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, LSP may require suitable evidence in order to authorise any future absence where illness has been given as the reason. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/carer/s aware of this expectation in advance.
- The school may contact parents/carers to discuss a pupil's absence in more detail.
- The school will follow up any absences where the parent/carer has not made contact to explain the reason. Following up on unexplained absences can take up a considerable amount of school resources,

therefore, the school expects parents/carers to report all absences. If a parent/carer does not contact the school on the morning of each absence, the absence may not be authorised, unless the school is satisfied there is a good reason why the pupil is unable to attend, and why the parent/carer was not able to contact the school by the required time on the day of absence.

- An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the school is not satisfied with the reason given for the absence, or where no reason has been provided.
- Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.
- Where there are continued concerns about a pupil's attendance which are not resolved informally, parents/carers may be asked to meet with the school to discuss the matter more formally. In some cases, this may result in a formal action plan being produced. The school may also invite other involved professionals, where relevant.

There is no change to the policy with regards to requests for term time absence. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason.

The table below indicates how what might seem like just a few days of absence can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

	Sessions missed	Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Lost hours of learning
Excellent	0 – 4	100% - 99%	0 – 2	0 – 10
Good	8 – 15	98% - 96%	4 – 7.5	20 – 37.5
Requires Improvement	19 – 34	95% - 91%	9.5 – 17	47.5 – 85
Persistent Absentee	38 – 54	90% - 86%	19 – 27	95 – 135
Critical	57 – 76	85% - 80%	28.5 – 38	142.5 – 190

As a Federation of 2 small schools, we understand that children cannot help being ill and that sometimes it may not be clear what that illness is. The new policy has been adapted to fit with our respective communities, whilst also being supportive to help your child be at school as much as possible. Please do not be alarmed if you receive a call, email or letter about your child's attendance; we will be following the steps in the policy to offer support if it's needed.

Kind regards,