



# ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

It is crucial that we know where our pupils are at all times so that we can fulfil our duty of care; this applies whether pupils are on site or being educated elsewhere. We recognise the strong link between attainment and attendance and the important partnership between parents and the school in ensuring that girls in our care achieve their potential, both socially and academically. The school is committed to working with girls and their parents to achieve the highest level of attendance possible.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps admission and attendance registers, and all pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. This includes our PACT International pupils. Our Foreign Language Exchange pupils are only registered on the Attendance register. The admission register contains the personal details of all pupils in the school and various other information. The attendance register records which pupils are present during the morning and afternoon sessions, using the codes provided. This register also indicates whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. The school also has regard to the [DfE guidance 'School attendance' \(August 2020\)](#).

At The Laurels School, the admission and attendance registers are kept electronically on an MIS system (iSAMS). iSAMS is hosted off site on a web server platform. It is backed up daily and an annual archive copy is made and kept for three years. Where at all possible the school holds onto the names and numbers of at least two emergency contacts for each pupil. An absence list is printed daily (for health & safety reasons) with all absences being recorded on iSAMS against the individual pupil record with a note from the parent explaining the absence.

## **Aims**

We celebrate excellent attendance and punctuality and ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of regular attendance and how this will benefit them. This is promoted through Assemblies and Form times and, where appropriate, is reported on pupils' reports as well as statistically to parents.

This document aims to:

- Promote high levels of punctuality;
- Reduce further the numbers of authorised absences;

- Promote the support networks in place to help pupils to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality, and therefore achieve their potential.

### **Principles**

If the school's aims are being successfully met, pupils should want to attend regularly. To achieve these aims this document is based upon the following principles:

- All parents/carers are aware of their responsibility to send their children to school on time and to provide reasons for absence or persistent lateness;
- Pupils are aware of what is expected of them;
- Registers are accurate and personal details are kept up to date;
- Staff concerns about absence and/or punctuality are reviewed by the Lead for Behaviour for Learning;
- Staff, where appropriate, share and update information;
- Those pupils causing concern are monitored and strategies developed;
- Negative issues affecting attendance or punctuality are addressed appropriately and support is put in place;
- Support is offered to pupils returning to school after extended periods of absence;
- Staff use the procedures for irregular attendance and punctuality consistently and fairly.

### **Our expectations for attendance are:**

- 95-100% Expected
- 90-95% Emerging cause for concern
- Below 90% A cause for concern

Missing days of learning in succession (or over a period of time) makes catching-up a challenge for the pupil, and often they find themselves falling behind. Attending school on a regular basis and being punctual is crucial for success; any absence results in lost learning time. The following data shows the impact on a pupil's learning if regularly absent or late:

<b>Attendance during Academic Year</b>	<b>Equates to Absent Days</b>	<b>Equates to Absent Weeks</b>
95%	10 days	2 weeks
90%	20 days	4 weeks
Below 90%	Exceeding 20 days	Exceeding 4 weeks

The Laurels School recognises that there will be situations where a pupil's attendance falls below expected levels due to unforeseen circumstances or illness. Some pupils may experience difficult family circumstances and will need extra support. We will always work with parents in supporting pupils who have emerging attendance issues. The Tutor is the primary point of contact for their child

and has an excellent overview of their daughter. If a child misses school, there may be an issue that parents or the school are not aware and it is important to identify the issue and put in early intervention. The Laurels School has a wide range of support systems which complement the school's established pastoral structure. These include weekly meetings between the Lead of Behaviour for Learning and the DSL / Wellbeing Manager. They also work in collaboration with the SENCO, tutors and parents in supporting pupils who may have difficulties.

### **School Procedures**

#### Registration

Morning registration is at 0830. Any pupil arriving after 8.40am will be marked late and must register with the School Administrator at Reception. Morning registration closes at 8.40am.

### **Absence Notification**

On the day of absence, parents of pupils should always email [absence@thelaurelsschool.org.uk](mailto:absence@thelaurelsschool.org.uk) or telephone the school to explain the absence. If pupils are unable to attend school by 9.10am, and there has been no contact from parents, our School Administrator will begin the process of telephoning parents to discuss the reason for the absence. Therefore, it is important that the school is made aware of any changes to parents' contact details.

Requests concerning matters other than illness (e.g. request for absence for family reasons or an external event) should be addressed to the Headteacher.

There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised absence: when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised absence: when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a pupil's absence from school after a parent's request. This includes parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for:

- shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained
- extended holidays

### **Absence Protocols:**

The Lead for Behaviour for Learning reviews attendance and punctuality on a daily basis. A half termly breakdown will be presented to the Headteacher.

If appropriate, staff should follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and all related policies and procedures for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. Wherever there is a suspicion of possible abuse, neglect or radicalisation, staff will inform the DSL. Staff should be particularly aware of the needs of SEN and disabled pupils as they can be impacted by matters such as bullying and child on child abuse without outwardly showing any signs. Concerns will also be raised for those pupils who are persistently absent from school, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

In line with our expectations for attendance, the Lead in Behaviour for Learning reviews half termly attendance data and the following table outlines our school procedures:

Attendance below 95% but above 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frequent absence or poor punctuality.</li> <li>- Emerging cause for concern.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion between the pupil and her Tutor to identify any underlying concerns or worries indicating what extra school support needs to be put in place. If so, this will be addressed.</p>
Attendance below 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Lead in Behaviour for Learning will ask the tutor to email parents.</li> </ul> <p>Should there be an underlying concern or worry, parents will be contacted, and the tutor will work with the pupil and her parents to put a plan of support in place. The school may liaise, in collaboration with parents, with external services or professionals such as the pupil's GP and Local Authority Early Help Services as additional support may be needed.</p> <p>If the same pupil has poor attendance in two consecutive half term data checks, the Lead in Behaviour for Learning will contact the parents directly and discuss a plan of support.</p> <p>If the same pupil has poor attendance in three consecutive half term data checks, the Assistant Head of Teaching and Learning will contact the parents directly and discuss a plan of support.</p>

It is recognised that a single bout of illness can result in the percentage attendance dropping below Expected. In such cases, the school will use its discretion in deciding the most appropriate supportive measures.

### Continuing Absence

Should a pupil be absent for more than a day without parents contacting the school, this will be treated as a matter of concern with potential safeguarding issues and appropriate action will be taken.

### Ten days' absence

The school recognises that "all schools must agree with the relevant Local Authority, the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more" (DfE guidance, October 2014). We will notify the Local Authority in such cases.

### Frequent Absence

The Tutor is a key part of supporting pupils with their attendance and punctuality. It is the responsibility of the relevant Tutor, with support from the Lead of Behaviour for Learning to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. The Lead for Behaviour for Learning will also identify emerging attendance issues. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absence, the Lead for Behaviour for Learning will speak with the pupil and protocols will be followed. The school may liaise, in collaboration with parents, with external services or professionals such as the pupil's GP and Local Authority Early Help Services. The school has a duty of care to all of its pupils and absence from school may be an indicator that pupils are in need of additional support. The potential for an underlying issue should always be addressed including bullying, work concerns, friendship issues etc.

### Persistent Absence

Research shows that gaps in attendance affect attainment, specifically when attendance falls below 95%; as such, we monitor all absences thoroughly. All pupils whose attendance level is 90% or below may be subject to a support plan to help the pupil return to full attendance. If the issue of poor attendance persists, the school may refer to the Local Education Authority for advice.

Pupils will be helped to positively reintegrate into school involving the help of outside agencies where appropriate. This could involve a number of different strategies including a reduced timetable and staff mentoring and will be led by the Assistant Head for Teaching and Learning. Any negative issues which may affect attendance, such as bullying must be addressed, and a plan of support put in place.

### Appointments

If there is a planned absence (e.g. for an orthodontist/hospital appointment) the School Administrator should be notified as soon as possible and preferably with at least a week's notice. Routine appointments such as GP, dentist or orthodontic appointments should be arranged for outside school hours. If formal notification has been given it is unnecessary to telephone the school on the day of absence.

### Requests For One Or More Day's Leave Of Absence

Our school holiday provision is long and provides ample opportunity for holidays during the specified times. We request that parents do not disrupt their daughter's education through making holiday arrangements that require their daughter missing school. Holiday leave will NOT be granted in term time unless the circumstances are exceptional and the pupil's attendance has previously been as Expected – 95% and above. If a pupil needs to be away from school in exceptional circumstances a letter or email requesting permission should be sent to the Headmistress at least three days in advance. If permission is given, the School Administrator will disseminate the information to the pupil's Tutor, as well as other relevant staff.

### **Lateness**

Alongside regular attendance, punctuality is equally important, and sanctions are imposed for lateness. An essential part of the curriculum, including bonding with the peer group, forging friendships, assemblies, celebrations, and dissemination of messages and information, which is crucial in helping pupils to develop their social and organisational skills, is lost if pupils miss the start of the school day. In cases where there is no reason for absence at registration, the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. The School Administrator will follow this up and request a letter/email from parents. The School Administrator should ascertain if the reason for lateness was unavoidable – snow, a traffic accident or exceptional family circumstances, for example.

### **Lateness Sanctions**

Statistics for lateness will be reviewed daily by the Lead for Behaviour of Learning. There will be a series of responses to repeated lateness.

Incident	Sanction
Late with no reasonable explanation from parents	Lead for the Behaviour for Learning reviews the late data and keeps a record of offenders.
Three causes for concern for lateness	Lunchtime detention, with email sent home.
Subsequent causes for concern for lateness	After school detention if lateness persists, with an email sent home. Tutor to work with pupil and parents in creating a support plan. Subsequent concerns - meeting with Lead for Behaviour for Learning or Assistant Head of Teaching and Learning and parents.

### **The Role of the Tutor**

Tutors are the first point of contact with parents and have a key part to play in supporting pupils in matters of attendance and punctuality.

- Pupils who have been absent for a period of time will be helped by their Tutor to catch up on work. If, whilst absent, it is possible for the pupil to complete work, the Tutor will coordinate this with the class teachers via Google Classroom. As soon as the pupil returns, the Tutor and pupil will

meet and a plan will be drawn up to catch up on work. Teaching staff are always willing to spend extra time with a pupil to ensure that she is up to date and understands the work that she has missed.

- The Tutor will also ensure that the pupil is brought up to date with information which they may have missed during their absence.
- Tutors are also expected to support pupils who are persistently late by setting targets for improvement and encouraging them to meet these.

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