



Leigh Academy
BEXLEY

Attendance Policy



LEIGH
Academies Trust

January 2024



Mission, Vision, Values and Ethos

Our Vision Statement:

At Leigh Academy Bexley, we believe in providing our young people with an extraordinary education; one that unlocks curiosity, ignites ambition and forges a social conscience, enabling our students to have an impact on the world around them. We are proud to be a truly comprehensive academy; an academy where all students are valued, supported and inspired. For students to thrive, we need to ensure that every student and staff member is invested in our community, that everyone is included and respected. As such we place inclusivity at the heart of our decision-making.

Our desire to create an extraordinary academy is built from our core values – Politeness, Kindness, Respect, Courage, Resilience and Ambition. We believe that if our students and staff demonstrate these values, they will be truly extraordinary individuals with the wisdom to make the right choices.

Our Mission:

“Having the wisdom to make the right choices”

Our Values and Ethos:

At Leigh Academy Bexley, our values are the cornerstone of everything we do.

Politeness

Behaviour that is respectful and considerate of other people

Respect

Due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others

Kindness

The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate

Courage

The ability to do something that frightens one; bravery

Ambition

A strong desire to do or achieve something. Desire and determination to achieve success

Resilience

The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness

Leigh Academy Bexley Attendance Policy

Positive attendance and academic achievement are an essential partnership for the success of any child's education. At Leigh Academy Bexley we strive to ensure our students and their families are explicitly aware of the importance of good attendance and the impact it can have both positively and negatively.

We consider any attendance above 98% to be outstanding and good when it is above 96%. When it falls below 96% it means a student is averaging more than 2 days of each module. When attendance drops below 90%, it is considered persistent absence. This equates to over 20 days absent in an academic year and studies show that this is likely to impact academic progress by an academic year.

This policy will outline the expectations of Leigh Academy Bexley around attendance, along with support measures we will provide and the follow up actions when expectations are not met.

At Leigh Academy Bexley we will ensure that:

- Every student has the right to access a broad and balanced education;
- No student is deprived of their educational opportunities by either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students;
- Rapid action is taken, where necessary to ensure an improvement in attendance or punctuality.

At Leigh Academy Bexley we recognise that:

- The vast majority of our students want to attend to learn, socialise with peers and fully prepare themselves to take their place in society;
- Students and their families may require support at some stage in meeting attendance obligations and responsibilities;
- Students who attend and are punctual, or make significant improvements need to be rewarded so this is recognised and encouraged;
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child's attendance at the Academy as set out by law (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 and Education Regulations 2006 - Section 8 - Amendments - Legislation).

At Leigh Academy Bexley we will encourage 100% attendance by:

- Clear, consistent communication with parents/carers about importance of regular, prompt attendance;
- Communicate with parents/carers to set improvement targets, when necessary, and share these with students and parents/carers;
- Accurate completion of registers within the first 15 minutes of each lesson;
- Contact parents/carers, usually by text, if their child is absent and no reason has been received;
- Utilise external agencies, where appropriate, to help support students/families when necessary.

Legal framework

This policy has been created to include all requirements of the Department for Education's 'Working together to improve school attendance' (May 2022) and 'School Attendance' (May 2022). It also refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on 'School attendance parental responsibility measures' (Jan 2015). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties from all stakeholders: The Education Act 1996, The Education Act 2002, The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The Education (Pupil registration) Regulations 2006. This Policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. The Education Act 1996 states that: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient, full-time education suitable:

- a) to their age, ability and aptitude;
- b) to any special educational needs, they may have;
- c) either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Leigh Academy Bexley and the Leigh Academies Trust are dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and have set out this Attendance Policy accordingly.

Links with other policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
- Feedback Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- LAT Policies: Attendance Policy and Suspensions Policy
- DfE Guidance: Searching & Screening

Roles & Responsibilities

1. London Borough of Bexley

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, London Borough of Bexley will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear to both parents/carers and students.
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure that the Academy is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for the children who are educated off-site.
- Have a School Liaison Officer (Inclusion & Attendance) to provide core functions.
- Communicate and advise: regularly provide updates, share examples of good practice, provide training where necessary.
- Multi-disciplinary support for families: including access to Early Help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and remove the barriers to attendance.
- Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention where other support has not been successful or engaged with.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their virtual school.

2. Leigh Academies Trust (including the Attendance Welfare Officer)

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, LAT Governance will:

- Review attendance regularly and scrutinise data, holding leaders to account.
- Annually review the Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow staff, parents and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Appoint an Attendance Welfare Officer to support the Academy with improving attendance (including weekly visits to discuss current attendance and carry out home visits where necessary).

3. Academy Leadership Team

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy Leadership Team will:

- Nominate a member of the Academy Leadership Team to oversee attendance throughout the Academy and an Attendance Lead in each College to coordinate its attendance.
- Be active in their approach to promoting excellent attendance to both students and parents/carers.
- Ensure that the Academy's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught about the importance and value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Review the Attendance Policy annually and ensure it is updated with Government legislation, Local Authority guidance and that the Academy Leadership Team are aware of guidance/legislation.
- Ensure staff are up to date with the Attendance Policy, their roles in promoting and recording attendance as well as how to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Report regularly to both Leigh Academies Trust
- Ensure clear systems are in place to record and report attendance and that they work effectively.

4. Academy Attendance Officers

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy Attendance Officers will:

- Record messages left on the student absence line and provide the unauthorised absence list for College SSMs to make calls home.
- Coordinate daily texts and emails to go out to parents/carers where their child is absent without notification.
- Highlight any safeguarding concerns around attendance to the DSL/DSO and relevant College.
- Liaise with College staff, LAT attendance officers and Bexley Educational Welfare Officers to support and encourage positive relationships to improve attendance.
- Coordinate reporting and monitoring of attendance each lesson across the academy.

5. College Attendance Leads (Student Support Managers)

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, the Academy College Attendance Leads will:

- Coordinate phone calls to be made for daily unauthorised absences within their College.
- Regularly review attendance data with the Heads of College and ensure letters are sent to parents/carers whose child's attendance has become a concern.
- Support in arranging meetings where necessary between the Academy and families to improve attendance. Also direct the LAT Attendance Officers and Bexley Educational Welfare Officers involvement with PA and SA students.
- Highlight any safeguarding concerns around attendance to the DSL/DSO.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of Looked After Children and those with a social worker.

6. All staff

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, all staff will:

- Complete their registers within the first 15 minutes of every lesson (at the very latest).
- Discuss attendance with their tutees and report any possible barriers to the relevant College teams.
- Actively engage in any CPD/training on or around attendance.

7. Parents/Carers

As part of our Academy approach to maintaining/improving attendance, all parents/carers will:

- Ensure the Academy has up to date contact details for their child (including contact numbers and addresses).
- Ensure their child attends the Academy during school hours and to avoid appointments during these times.
- To make contact, preferably before 8am in the event their child is unable to attend.
- To communicate with the relevant College team in the event there are any barriers to their child attending.

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an accurate attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will record whether every student is:

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

Leigh Academy Bexley's attendance code list is in line with the Department for Education's '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' (Page 55). Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Students must arrive in school no later than 8.25am on each school day ready and prepared for the first period at 8:30am. The register for the first session will be taken by 8:40am on each school day. The register for the second session will be taken by 11:50am on each school day.

Unplanned absence and illnesses

Parents/carers must notify the Academy on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.00am. This can be done by email or telephone to the Academy. Where a student exceeds more than 3 days absence within a year, medical evidence may be requested for any further future absences.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, students should attend the Academy for as much of that day as possible.

Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the Academy will authorise absence such as a family bereavement. All authorised absences other than medical appointments or illness require a leave of absence request to be emailed to info@labexley.org.uk with subject heading 'Student Leave of Absence request'.

Fixed term suspensions

In the event a student is issued with a fixed term suspension, this is treated as an authorised absence. These will be dealt with in line with the Academy's Behaviour Management Policy.

Family holidays and extended leave

We cannot permit leave of absence for holidays. The Principal has power to grant authorised absence for exceptional circumstances. In the event there is such a request this must be put in writing to the attention of the relevant Head of College and we ask for a minimum of two weeks notice. Where students have taken unauthorised leave, they may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice, particularly where they have not received consent from the Academy.

Religious observance

The Academy recognises there may be times where students of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of the Academy's holidays and weekends. We will allow authorised absences for these times. These absences will be verified by our Attendance Welfare Officer in conjunction with London Borough of Bexley as they hold the official record for dates of religious observance. Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the Academy written notice in advance.

Punctuality

Registration begins from 8.30am daily. Students who arrive after this time but before 10:40am must sign in with the Student Service Manager on the student entrance. Those who arrive after 10:40am must sign in at the main reception. Students who are recorded as late will be required to complete a LOPT at the end of that Academy day. Any unjustifiable reason for lateness will be recorded as unauthorised. It is imperative students sign in to ensure that appropriate health and

safety regulations are followed. There will also be sanctions implemented on those who are late/persistently late. This can be found set out in the Behaviour Management Policy.

Attendance monitoring for students at risk/vulnerable

All students are monitored closely including any student who is recorded as vulnerable or at risk. All concerns are recorded, reported and acted upon immediately with appropriate staff and external agencies where necessary. Safeguarding procedures and agency referral procedures are followed when required, as set out in our Child Protection Policy.

Persistence and severe absence

Students who have less than 90% attendance at any one time are recorded as persistent absentees. Those with less than 50% attendance at any one time are recorded as severe absentees.

Removing a Student from Roll

As per The Education Regulations Act 2006 Section 8, when all possible actions have been taken, we will remove the student from the Academy roll due to continued serious absence.

Where a student has failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days, immediately following an authorised leave of absence, and there are no reasonable grounds for the student not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the student is, and if unable to establish the student's whereabouts we will remove from roll [[Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)].

Where a student has failed to attend the Academy for 20 school days or more and absence is unauthorised, and there are no reasonable grounds for the student not to attend, the Academy and Local Authority will make reasonable enquiries to ascertain where the student is, and if unable to establish the student's whereabouts we will remove from roll [[Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)].

Children Missing from Education (CME)

London Borough of Bexley procedures to safeguard missing children states that the Attendance Officer/Lead should be responsible for checking-in with, and referral of, any student who has not attended, been seen or contact made from parents regarding their absence of more than 20 days. A home visit will be conducted before this referral is made.

Interventions & Penalty Notices

The Academy and London Borough of Bexley will make use of a full range of interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools/academies and the London Borough of Bexley to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family.

These are:

- Attendance Improvement Plans (AIP)
- Education supervision orders (issued by the London Borough of Bexley)
- Attendance prosecution (AS1 referral completed by the Academy to the London Borough of Bexley)
- Parenting Orders and Voluntary Orders (London Borough of Bexley)

- Fixed Penalty Notices (London Borough of Bexley)

London Borough of Bexley can fine any adult with day-to-day care for the unauthorised absence of their child, from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be directly paid to the London Borough of Bexley. A referral to London Borough of Bexley will be made dependent on criteria being met.

This may take into account:

- 10 sessions or 5 days unauthorised absence within 100 days (this can include being late after 9am);
- One-off instances such as unauthorised holiday (10 sessions or 5 days);
- Where a fixed term suspended student is found in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, London Borough of Bexley can decide whether to prosecute a parent or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for promoting attendance:

- Regular communication with staff, students and parents/carers;
- The effective use of MCAS so parents can access their child's attendance;
- Texts sent out for students who are absent without reason;
- Letters in the event a students attendance falls below expectations;
- Home visits where necessary;
- Utilise external agencies where necessary;
- Digital displays for tutor group attendance;
- Attendance Improvement Plans;
- Certificates and rewards for students with positive attendance;
- We have a limited number of uniform items which can be loaned if this is a barrier to attendance.

Appendices

1. [Absence Procedures](#)
2. [Letter 1 template](#)
3. [Letter 2 template](#)
4. [Letter 3 template](#)
5. [Holiday Letter](#)