

Policy Focus	Attendance						
Lead Policy Holder	Pete Jenkins						
Designated Director	Mark Escott	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Judith Johnson		Rob Gasson		
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BoD Approval	Month: July Year: 2020						
BoD Review Date	Month: July Year: 2021						

School Aim

Our Company (Life Chance Education Ltd) is committed to transforming the life chances of the young people and families that we work with. We support children who have suffered trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and exhibit Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH). Our educational staff, multi-disciplinary team of therapists, and support team work together to create an environment that meets the holistic needs of children who have difficult or complex life stories.

By delivering the best features of a special school and alternative provision, coupled to innovative educational and therapeutic frameworks, we can help our students thrive. We believe that children don't have to be bound by the past but can build a bright future if they have the right support.

Our Mission is to ensure that we help every child we work with achieve their full potential, both academically and personally. As a school we aspire to being outstanding, so our students can be too – as exemplified in our school motto:

'Being the Best We Can Be'

Our Aims are to:

- Meet the previously unmet needs of young people and enable learning and employment.
- Provide positive interventions into barriers to learning and negative family or intergenerational life cycles.
- Contribute to community and social change.
- Reduce costs to society in terms of both social and economic benefits

To reach these aims we will use concepts and best practice in learning, neuroscience, emotional well-being, child development and coaching.

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Appendices (Embedded / E.Links)

(Statutory Documents – Data Sets – Recording Templates – Resources - SoL etc)

Glossary of Acronyms

LCE	Life Chance Education
ACEs	Adverse childhood experiences
MRE	Monitoring, Review & Evaluation
CPD	Continual Professional Development
HoS	Heads of School
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
SLT	Senior Leadership Team Meetings
H & S	Health & Safety
LA	Local Authority

1. Statement of Intent for this Policy

This Policy is to provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their responsibilities and to ensure consistent and effective practice across all school sites. It demonstrates the school's commitment with regard to students, parents and other partners.

This Policy contributes to the school's Statutory Compliance Portfolio (see section 3).

Why is this Policy Important?

The aim of this attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students. Regular attendance at school is key to steady student progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

2. Statutory / Legislative Basis

N/A

3. Links to Other Related Policies / Procedures

This policy sits within the Statutory & Compliance Portfolio of Policies which School for Inspiring Talents has adopted. It therefore relates to other policies in that themed grouping which include:

- Attendance Policy
- Attendance & Student Roll Register
- Complaints Policy
- Disabilities Policy Inc. Accessibilities Plan
- Examination Centre Policy
- Exams Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Website Information
- SEND Policy?

4. Monitoring, Review & Evaluation (MRE): Compliance - Consistency – Impact

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation (MRE) of all aspects of our work as a school is undertaken to ensure that we are delivering on what we say we want to achieve with and for our students. In the interests of equity and high expectations for all our students, we are continuously checking for:

- Compliance and for Quality
- Implementation match with our Intent
- Consistency between staff and sites
- And to ensure value for money for our Referring Local Authorities.

Our school staff are part of our school culture of continuous improvement based on supervision, self-reflection, peer working, and CPD. Daily staff briefings and debriefings provide immediate feedback and strategies for even greater success next time round.

Our framework for MRE is achieved via 3 key approaches:

Internally

- Our annual Self Evaluation Position Statement (SEPS) aligned with Ofsted Evaluation Areas and Grade Descriptors
- Learning Walks by HoS in own and other Phases/Sites
- Individual Student Assessment Framework and Trackers
- CEO & Executive Principal's Observations, Spot Sampling and Random Checks
- Monthly SLT Progress Reviews of the Operational School Improvement Plan (OSIP)
- Heads of School Monitoring
- Appraisal & Performance Management approaches.
- SchoolPod, Incident Logs Reviews and Spot Sampling, plus trend monitoring across the year

- Staff Briefings
- Student Voice Surveys
- Peer Reviews through Team Working
- CPD Evaluations

Accountability MRE

- Our Board of Directors Link Portfolio Visits and Observations
- Director Monitoring of all Independent School Standards (ISS) Themes annually as part of a rolling programme
- Termly Directors Scrutiny of the CEO, Executive Principal and Chief Operations Officer Reports to the Board
- Termly H&S checks
- Directors Involvement in the cycle of Policy Review
- Financial and Curriculum Resource Monitoring

Externally

- Referring LAs' Annual Health Checks and Audits
- Commissioned Reviews of aspects of practice – specialist and generic e.g. Behaviour, Health & Safety
- Feedback from submissions for Awards and Quality Standards e.g. TISS
- Parent / Carer Feedback e.g. via Class Dojo
- Ofsted Monitoring and Inspection Visits
- User Schools Feedback

5. Key Policy Content - Information / Guidance Relating to our Practice

Aims/Objectives of This Framework

SfiT takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, students, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and (b) to any special educational needs, he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

(a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and

(b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age. [Normally referred to as the start of the term following their 5th birthday]

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year —

(a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,

(b) if he attains that age on that day, or

(c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

[Normally referred to as the last Friday in June in the school year in which they obtain the age of 16 years].

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Directors (BoD)

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the BoD will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff.
- annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and children to implement the policy effectively.
- nominate or identify a member of the Board of Directors who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance.

- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children, and staff.
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year, take time at Director's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year.
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site.
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data, including for vulnerable groups, and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff.
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.
- ensure that data is used within the school to measure the impact of strategies used to improve attendance.

Executive Principal and Head of School

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the principal and Head of School will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- coordinate with the Directors to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review.
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job.
- report to the Board of Directors each term and the lead Director for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision.
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.
- develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend.
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.
- ensure that the local authority is informed in a timely manner if students cease to attend.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement.
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue.
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily.
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed.
- work with external agencies to support students and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- encourage and support their children's aspirations.

- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (see section 4), and include an expected date for return.
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises.
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Principal (see section 4).

Students

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that students:

- speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.

Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absence

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

When a student is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day and each following day of absence.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

Medical or dental appointments

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

Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absent. The Principal will arrange for work to be sent home.

Absence in exceptional circumstances

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. The Principal has the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If the Principal grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Principal weeks in advance of the leave being taken and by using the required form. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered, and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

When deciding whether to authorise absence, the Principal will consider if there are exceptional circumstances. If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice.

Religious observance

SfIT recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

Late arrival

Registration begins at 0900. Students who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. The registration period ends at 0915.

Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised.

School action: following up absence

School action: following up absences

After the registration period closes if there are any unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the principal or Head of School will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Where students have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

The school will take disciplinary action against any students who are discovered to be truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make parents/carers liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carers, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2 500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Actions to improve attendance

Below 96%

- Head of school will discuss attendance with parent/carers and student where appropriate.
- Head of school identifies issues affecting attendance and supports appropriately.
- Improved attendance will become a student target.
- Initial alert letter sent to parents/carers by Head of School – Attendance certificate included.

Below 92%

- Head of school support for student continues.
- Head of school to discuss absence with Executive Principal through line management meetings.
- Alert letter (including references to legal obligations) sent to parents/carers by Head of School – Attendance certificate included.
- Head of school to implement support strategies to assist.
- Persistent Absenteeism (below 90%)
- Head of School support continues
- Family practitioner to arrange a home visit
- Head of School to meet with parents – minutes of the meeting to be recorded
- Penalty notice discussed
- Deadline set for improvement
- Possible multi-agency support to help make improvements

6. Implications for Stakeholders

Board of Directors	Board of Directors to review the policy every three years
All Staff	Responsibility of staff to achieve 100% attendance across schools
Designated Specialist Staff	Heads of School to monitor attendance, administration staff to record attendance on SchoolPod and produce relevant paperwork for non-attenders
Students	To aim for 100% attendance
Families/Carers	Responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends school
Referring LAs	Monthly attendance reports to Las/LAC
Contractors	N/A
Visitors	N/A
Agencies	N/A
Schools	N/A

7. Relevant Data Sets / Metrics

N/A

8. Relevant Resources

Appendices (Embedded / E.Links)

Admissions Policy
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