



# Attendance Policy

July 2020

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## Linton School

### Attendance Policy

**Adopted by:** Rebekah Dennett

**Review date:** July 2021

**Designated Safeguard Lead:** Rebekah Dennett

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020

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**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020

**Head Teacher:** Rebekah Dennett

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020

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**Lancashire County Council – Emergency Duty Team:** 0300 123 6722 (out of office hours)

**Blackpool Council – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):** 01253 477299

**If the child is at immediate risk, please call the police on 999.**

## Our School

Linton School is an independent special school for young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties for both boys and girls aged 8-18 years old. The school is registered for up to 12 learners and consists of 4 small classes to provide a nurturing environment to develop and progress throughout their learning journey. We are a trauma informed school that is able to support children and teenagers who suffer with trauma or mental health problems and whose troubled behaviour acts as a barrier to learning. Located in rural Preston we therefore benefit from some amazing outdoor space where we develop our outdoor, equestrian and horticulture skills. All the staff at Linton School are committed to creating a setting which not only focuses on academic success, but also provides our learners opportunities to develop their social, communication and independent skills.

## Culture and Ethos

We are committed to providing a nurturing, safe and ambitious learning environment that supports every young person to achieve lifelong skills through a diverse learner centered curriculum. Respectful and supportive relationships are at the heart of all we do; we value every member of the school community equally. Through bespoke curriculums tailored towards each individual pupil's needs, experiences, interests and strengths we foster a love for learning and support our young people to achieve their full potential. As an educational setting our main aim is to prepare our pupils to make a positive contribution towards society by giving our students the skills they need to be successful, resilient and inspirational young adults. Linton schools purpose is to improve the quality of life for our young people both now, and in the future, 'building our futures together'.

## The Vision

Linton School provides a safe, nurturing learning environment to provide skills for lifelong opportunities, which gives the young people an ambitious outlook towards their future.

The vision drives everything we do and will be achieved through:

- Outdoor enrichment activities to promote life skills through play, nurture and teamwork.
- Promoting independence, patience and listening skills through Equestrian lessons.
- Multi-disciplinary links from both internal and external companies to provide a bespoke, broad and balanced curriculum that develops the education of our pupils.
- Empowering each learner to achieve their personal goals and develop a lifelong love of learning.
- A positive and ambitious school environment that promotes learning for all.
- Offering a broad range of learning experiences within the curriculum that values academic attainment as well as developing social skills, experiences and resilience.

**More information about the school can be found in the school Prospectus.**

## 1. Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable pupils to extend their potential.

The purpose of this document is to establish our expectation that all students attend school every day. It outlines the steps we take to promote good attendance at school and tackle absence.

The Government sets a clear expectation of at least 95% attendance for all students in all schools. At Linton School we believe every lesson and every school day counts. We expect children to attend school every day and on time, unless absence is authorised by the Head Teacher. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend full-time.

## 2. Absence from school

Whilst schools are required to consider parental requests for absence from school in term time, it remains the legal duty of parents/carers to ensure the regular attendance of a child of compulsory school age. Therefore every session of unauthorised absence could constitute a criminal offence.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

An 'authorised absence' is one that has been approved by the Head Teacher.

'Unauthorised absences' are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. Examples include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. to go shopping, to care for a sibling, a pupil's/parent's/sibling's/relative's birthday
- Truancy/refusal to attend
- Absences that have not been properly explained
- Illness without medical evidence
- Holidays in term-time
- Arriving late after the register has closed without adequate explanation
- If an absence has been authorised and subsequently parents/carers keep their child away in excess of the agreed period, the extra time will be treated as an unauthorised absence.
- Removing a child from school without the permission of the Head Teacher

## **Consideration of Absence from School requests**

DfE guidelines clearly state that absence from school can be taken in exceptional circumstances and this means that the parent/carer must make a strong case for taking a child out of school in an academic year. Exceptional circumstances must be explained fully to the school who will then consider the request. Any medical appointments/procedures during school time are always authorised but school does require evidence such as appointment cards or letters.

Parents/carers should not expect that schools would automatically agree to an absence from school during term time. All requests are at the discretion of the Head Teacher and can only be authorised by her or member of staff with designated authority in her absence.

An absence request for a holiday can only be made by the parent/carer with whom the child lives or by the person with parental responsibility. In some circumstances this person may have to request an absence on behalf of other adults. This safeguards against an estranged parent or other adult making a request without the knowledge of the parent/carer who has care and control.

The Head Teacher will treat each application individually and will consider the following factors when making a decision:

- The reason given for the absence
- The child's overall attendance record
- Whether the absence falls during a year when public examinations are due
- The effect on the child's continuity of learning
- The family circumstances

Linton School will immediately inform the parents/carers if a child goes missing from school. The school holds an emergency contact number for more than one person. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. This provides the school with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

## **Children Missing Education (CME) and removing a child from the school roll ('off-rolling')**

Children Missing Education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. For this reason, Linton School will not remove a child from the admissions roll without the full knowledge and agreement of the Placing Local Authority (LA) and through discussion with all relevant professionals.

Linton School will notify the Placing LA when we are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the Pupil Registration regulations (Annex A). This includes when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school. When removing a pupil's name, the notification will include: (a) the full name of the pupil, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register.

### **3. Timings of the school day and registration period**

The school day starts at 8.45am Morning registration is between 8.45am and 9.00am. The register will stay open until 9.30am – any pupil arriving without good reason between 9.00am and 9.30am will be marked 'L'. This means they have arrived late in school before the register has closed. Their time of arrival and the reason for lateness will be noted in the register. Any pupil arriving in school after 9.30am without good reason will be marked 'U'. Their time of arrival and the reason for lateness will be noted in the register. The 'U' code means that a pupil is in school but has arrived after the register closed. This counts as unauthorised absence.

Afternoon registration period is between 12.45pm and 12.50pm.

### **4. Daily absence procedure**

When a pupil is absent, the Head Teacher will record the absence in the register, using the national attendance and absence codes.

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the school if their child is unable to attend school. This should be done before the start of the school day and can be done by telephoning the school. As part of our safeguarding procedures, when a child is absent without explanation, the Head Teacher or tutor will contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason why the child is absent.

The school has a duty of care to all pupils and will make first day absence contact for all children for whom no explanation has been received and every subsequent day until a reason is obtained. If school is not able to ascertain the reason for the child's absence the tutor or Head Teacher may visit the child's home to find out the reason for their absence.

Every effort will be made to know the whereabouts of the child (including contact with external agencies) and, if necessary, school will refer the child to the Local Authority as Missing in Education in conjunction with statutory guidance.

Parents/carers are expected to keep the school informed when they have received advice that their child will be absent for a prolonged period for example due to illness or changes in personal circumstances. In these cases the school will work closely with the parents/carers to support the child back into school and if appropriate provide work for them to complete at home during the absence.

The school monitors pattern of absence and works with the parents/carers, therapy teams and the Placing LA when absence falls below government expectations.

A failure to provide an adequate explanation for absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The school has a duty to monitor patterns of absence and reasons for absence. The school reserves the right to request medical evidence (this can be a label from prescribed medication, or a signed appointment card for the GP/ dental surgery etc) in order to authorise an absence from school.

## **5. Arriving late / leaving school early**

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child or young person arrive at school on time and ready to learn. When a child is transported to school, parents/carers must ensure that their child or young person is ready on time to access this. Pupils should not have to arrive late or leave early in order to access transport.

Parents/carers should try to make medical appointments outside school hours.

All children arriving late must be signed in to the main school office and provide a reason as to why they are late. Failure to provide an adequate explanation for a late arrival may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. All reasons are recorded and monitored regularly as part of our normal school practice. The school may inform the Social Worker and or other relevant agencies when a child has a pattern of late arrivals.

In some exceptional circumstances, children may have to be collected early from school. Parents/carers who wish to do this must inform the school by telephone or in writing, stating clearly the reason why the child is leaving school.

If there are other arrangements for the child to leave the school premises, such as another adult will collect the child, the school must be informed. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to keep the school fully aware of contact details of named and responsible adults. When the child is collected, they must be signed out. This allows the school to protect the child and to ensure robust procedures for health and safety and wellbeing as well as safeguarding against an estranged parent/carer making a request without the knowledge of the parent/carer who has care and control.



## **6. Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Head Teacher every 12 months. The date of next review will be **July 2021**.

## **7. Links to other policies and procedures**

For further information on aspects of this policy please refer to:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy

## Appendix A: Registration Codes

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM **
\	Present PM **
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present **
I	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
E	Authorised absence as pupil is excluded, with no alternative provision made
C	Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances
B	Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site ( NOT dual registration) **
D	Dual registered (at another establishment) - NOT counted in possible attendances **
J	Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview **
P	Approved education activity as pupil is attending an approved sporting activity **
V	Approved education activity as pupil is away on an educational visit or trip **
W	Approved education activity as pupil is attending work experience **
G	Unauthorised absence as pupil is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
U	Unauthorised absence as pupil arrived after registers closed
O	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
N	Unauthorised absence as pupil missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances **
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances **
X	Pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'