



Leechpool Primary School - Attendance Policy and Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have and we will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support regular attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

There is a relationship between attendance of pupils and their development, attainment and progress.

The school is committed to promoting good attendance as part of its dedication to ensure quality educational provision to give its pupils the best start in life.

The Education Act 1996 states that:

S.576:

“Meaning of “parent”.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, “parent”, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
- (b) who has care of him.”

S.7:

“Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age. 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.”

S.444:

“Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil. If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.”

The responsibility for giving strategic direction to attendance is led by the governing body. This will include monitoring, reporting, reviewing and planning for attendance, developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance and setting any targets. There is a governor appointed to lead on attendance, who will have regular contact with Headteacher as part of the monitoring and review process.



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The headteacher and senior leadership team will ensure that the governing body's objectives are met by the effective management of attendance and report to the governing body in relation to this. Managing attendance will include: evaluating whole school data, surfacing trends, and attendance of defined groups, to enable planning of possible interventions; and considering individual cases of concern, to determine any appropriate interventions.

School staff are responsible to ensure they promote the school's ethos, set an example of attendance and punctuality, enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance for individual students.

Parents/Carers have responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils have the responsibility to be on time for lessons and ready to learn.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages and enables good attendance
- How the school monitors and reviews attendance
- How the school monitors punctuality and lateness
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Leave of absence in term time
- Why attendance and punctuality matter

ENCOURAGING AND ENABLING GOOD ATTENDANCE

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school. All staff make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised. Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents through reports and letters.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE

The school will consider annually, in accordance with its support needs in relation to attendance, the commission of the Horsham Schools Partnership (HSP) Attendance Officer to oversee attendance data and perform home visits and panel meetings in line with the policy.

The school's Attendance Team and HSP Attendance Officer will log conversations with parents about attendance to assist in the monitoring of attendance and the offering of support.



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By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. The school will ensure that its staff receive appropriate training and support to appropriately use attendance codes in line with DfE guidance and best practice.

To enable the appropriate coding of attendance or the authorisation of absence, the school may request additional information or evidence, eg. in relation to medical appointments or illness. (Medical evidence may include: an appointment letter, a GP appointment card signed / stamped by a receptionist, a prescription, prescribed medication.)

Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Administrative Staff.

All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes, the Administrative Staff check the messages and operate 'first day calling' for those pupils absent with no reason given.

Attendance data is held electronically on BROMCOM and is accessible by the Attendance Team, HSP attendance officer and Senior Leadership who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

The Headteacher and Senior leadership Team monitors the attendance of pupils each half term. The flow diagram and letters appended, outline the school's approach for monitoring and enabling attendance. The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

Returns of school data are made termly to the Department for Education (DfE) and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS

The Headteacher monitors lateness of pupils as being punctual for school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time, where they are welcomed in the playground by class teachers at 8.35am.

There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them. Registration is taken at 8.55 a.m for Infants, 8.45am for Juniors and again at 1pm for Infants and 1.15pm for Juniors. A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked as 'late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school. Pupils who arrive after 9.15am for Infants or 9.25am for Juniors will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U code).

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the headteacher will write to the parents/carers using the appended letter about punctuality, stating the total minutes late over a determined period.



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If there is no improvement, the school's Attendance officer will arrange a meeting with the parent/carers. In the event of persistent lateness, the school may make a formal referral to West Sussex Council and issue penalty notices.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

The DfE recognises the importance of regular attendance, and it is a requirement for the Headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. The final decision is made by the Headteacher on behalf of West Sussex County Council.

Wherever possible parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.

If a child is absent from school for any reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing, or by telephone before 9am and reason for it. Such calls are always logged on Bromcom/CPOMs. Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation, if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given or if it is a holiday in term time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

The Government issued new regulations in August 2025 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the West Sussex Attendance Service of West Sussex Council.

West Sussex Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices.



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If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to West Sussex Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 per child if paid within 21 days).

WHY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY MATTERS

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to West Sussex Council.

Reasonable steps to be taken by school staff include:

- Telephone calls/ messages to all known contacts (parents are asked to provide a minimum of two
- emergency contacts in the event of children not arriving at school without prior notification and also for other emergency purposes).
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered
- Possible home visits
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the pupil/family
- All contacts and outcomes to be recorded on the pupil's file



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EQUALITY AND SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

Persistent absenteeism or unexplained absence can be a sign of safeguarding concerns, including neglect. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), all staff are trained to identify such patterns and are required to report concerns via the school's safeguarding procedures. Where attendance issues raise concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, the school will initiate early help or make a referral to children's social care. Attendance will always be considered within the broader context of the child's welfare.



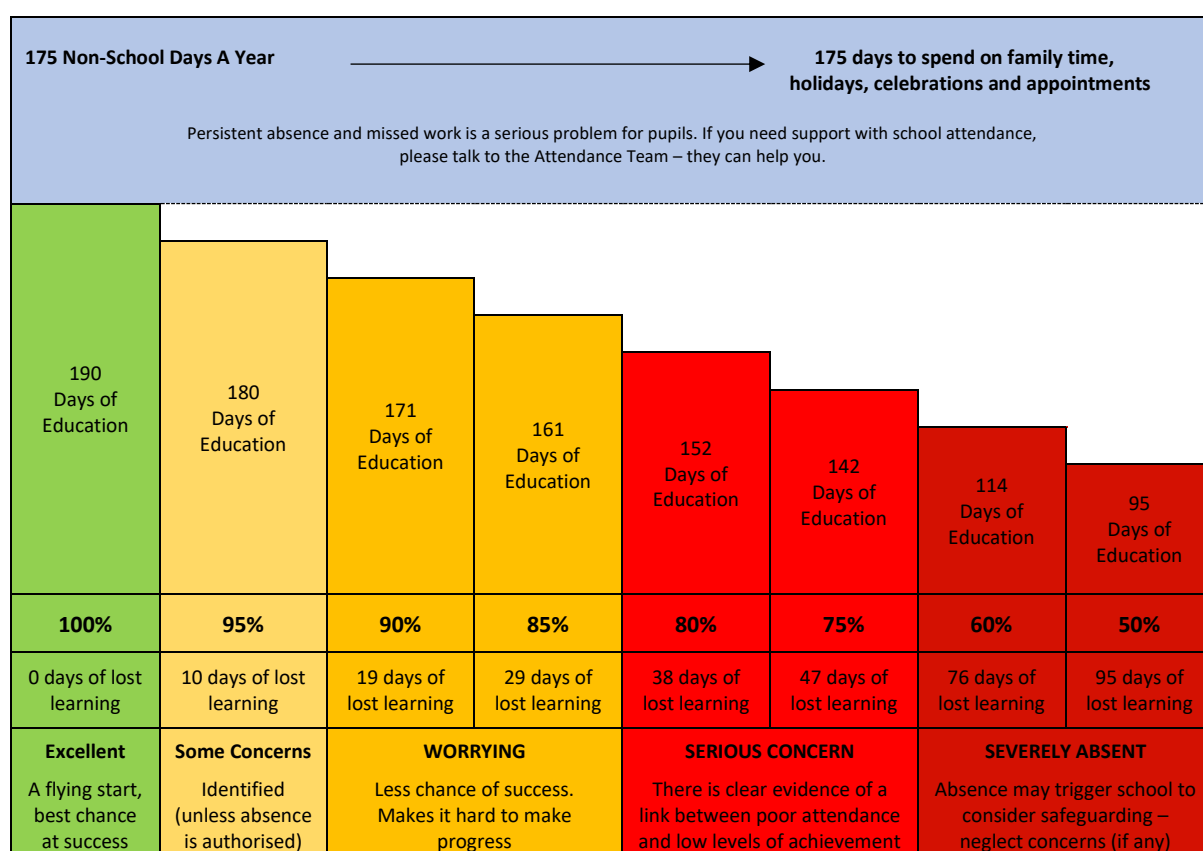
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IN CONCLUSION

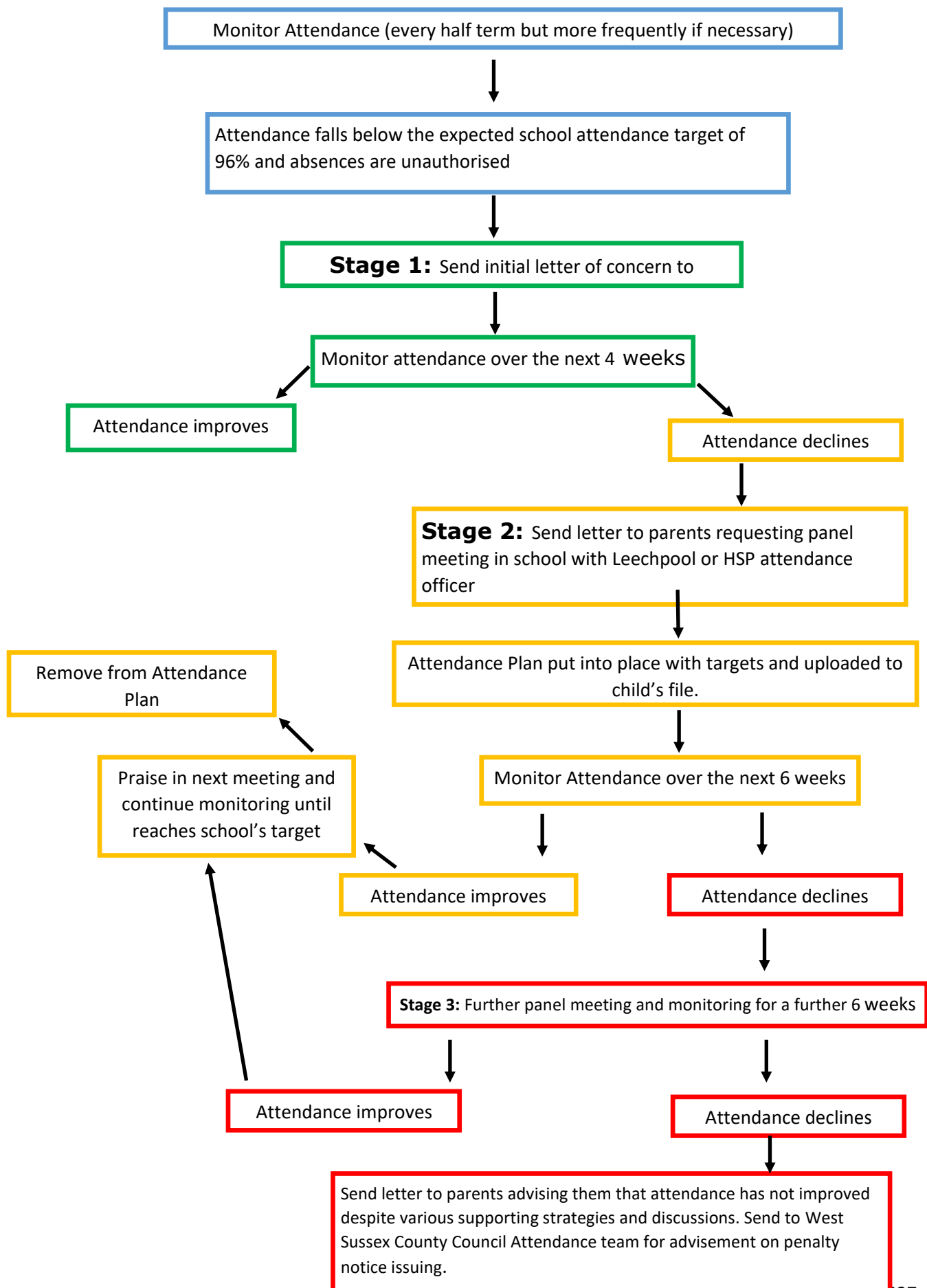
It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.

Leechpool Primary greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic potential and to support their social development and for this to happen individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

Leechpool Primary School Flowchart for Attendance Monitoring (escalation process) is attached below.



Leechpool Primary School Flow Chart For Attendance Monitoring (Escalation Process)





Acting Co Headteachers: Mrs H Smith & Mr E Law

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Date >

Dear <Name of Parent>

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions. We are therefore writing to you due to <Name of pupil>'s current number of late sessions:

Attendance	<current attendance> %
Number of late sessions	<current AA> %
Number of "unauthorised" lates	<current UA> %

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year
15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year
20 minutes late every day = 13 days of school lost a year
30 minutes late every day = 19 days of school lost a year

We understand that the school mornings can be hectic, but when your child is late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. If your child arrives 30 minutes after the register has been taken, they will have an "unauthorised" late mark – this is the same as an "unauthorised absence" – please see the Attendance policy for definition and actions school will take.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance, please do not hesitate to contact <named school person> on <telephone number>

Yours sincerely



Leechpool Primary School

...breathing life into learning...to be the best we can be...

01403 210233

@ reception@leechpool.w-sussex.sch.uk

www.leechpoolprimaryschool.co.uk

Leechpool Lane, Horsham, West Sussex,
RH13 6AG

Acting Co Headteachers: Mrs H Smith & Mr E Law

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Date >

Dear <name of parent / carer>

Since we wrote to you on <date of 1st letter>, <name of pupil>'s attendance has failed to improve significantly and is now <attendance percentage>%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year.

When looking into the reasons why <name of pupil> has been absent from school, we noticed that the majority of the absence was linked to illness and/or medical reasons.

Due to the level of illness and/or medical absence, I must ask that if any further absence occurs, evidence must be received by the school that shows that the pupil has been absent and is being supported by a Doctor. Some examples of evidence that could be used are: Prescriptions, Appointment Cards, Doctor's Notes, e.t.c.

If this evidence is not supplied when your child returns after an illness or medical absence, your child's absence will be recorded as "unauthorised".

We would appreciate your support to make sure <name of child>'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve.

Thank you for your cooperation

Yours sincerely

<School Contact>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Date>

Dear <Name of Parent>

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance, we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. We then issue a first Letter to register our concern with parents. We are therefore writing to you due to <Name of pupil>'s current level of attendance:

Attendance	<current attendance> %
Authorised Absence	<current AA> %
Unauthorised Absence	<current UA> %

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child's future progression.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

90% and below: 19 days + absence a year

The Government classes Young People in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance, please do not hesitate to contact <named school person> on <telephone number>

Yours sincerely

<School Contact>

Stage 2 letter Template



...breathing life into learning...to be the best we can be...

01403 210233

@reception@leechpool.w-sussex.sch.uk

www.leechpoolprimaryschool.co.uk

Leechpool Lane, Horsham, West Sussex,
RH13 6AG

Acting Co Headteachers: Mrs H Smith & Mr E Law

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Date >

Dear <name of parent / carer>

Since we wrote to you on <date of 1st letter>, <name of pupil>'s attendance has failed to improve significantly, and is now <attendance percentage>%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year – your child will spend more time at home than at school this academic year!

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. It is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits of attendance forming with <name of pupil>. Poor attendance habits now will make it increasingly difficult for you to ensure your child attends school regularly as they get older.

We wish to help <name of pupil> to improve <his/her> attendance. I would like you to attend a meeting in school with me on <date> at <time> to discuss what we can all do to help <name of pupil> attend more regularly.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange another time and date to meet.

Thank you for your cooperation

Yours sincerely

<School Contact>

Stage 3 letter Template



...breathing life into learning...to be the best we can be...

Acting Co Headteachers: Mrs H Smith & Mr E Law

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@reception@leechpool.w-sussex.sch.uk

www.leechpoolprimaryschool.co.uk

Leechpool Lane, Horsham, West Sussex,
RH13 6AG

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Address>

<Date >

Dear <name of parent / carer>

As you will be aware from our previous two letters, our meeting and your attendance plan, we have concerns with regard to <name of pupil>'s attendance of <attendance percentage>%. Unfortunately, <name of pupil>'s absence and their attendance has failed to improve significantly.

I enclose your child's most recent registration certificate for your information.

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. It is important that low attendance is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits of attendance forming with <name of pupil>. Poor attendance habits now will make it increasingly difficult for you to ensure your child attends school regularly as they get older.

We wish to help <name of pupil> to improve <his/her> attendance. I would like you to attend a Stage 3 meeting in school with me on <date> at <time> to discuss what we can all do to help <name of pupil> attend more regularly.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange another time and date to meet. We would appreciate your support to make sure <name of child>'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and may refer your child's absence to West Sussex County Council for consideration of a fixed penalty notice fine or legal action if unauthorised absence continues to occur.

Yours sincerely,

<School Contact>