



ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2026

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INTRODUCTION

'Lady Banks Primary School is a school for everyone' (Ofsted 2024).

The school's aim is to provide 'a rich, varied and inclusive curriculum that harnesses every child's potential'. One of the most important ways that this can be achieved is for every child to have excellent attendance. Children who attend Lady Banks should be at school, arriving on time, every day it is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. This policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

The Senior Leader responsible for attendance is the Headteacher- Mrs Kate Needs. To contact Mrs Needs with any matters relating to attendance please email office@ladybanks.school

This policy also follows the statutory guidance from the Department for Education's 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (July 2026)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at Lady Banks Primary School is everybody's responsibility - parents/carers, pupils, governors and all members of our school staff.

Lady Banks Primary School will:

- Promote a culture and ethos that enables children to take responsibility and be aware that their regular attendance at school is vital.
- Foster positive attitudes to attendance and quickly identify and provide support with any underlying issues that could affect attendance.
- Communicate clearly the school's expectations that every pupil should attend regularly and be on time through the school newsletters. New families to our school are given an admission pack and referred to the policies section of the school website which includes the Attendance Policy.
- Monitor attendance and absence closely in partnership with the Local Authority Attendance Support Team.
- Will meet with the parents/carers to discuss strategies to help to improve attendance where concerns have been identified by the Attendance Officer
- If attendance does not improve after an agreed period, a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Attendance Officer will then meet with the parents/carers to identify strategies, including whether support from outside agencies may be needed.
- Call upon, in some cases, the Local Authority's Attendance Support Team to support the school and family.
- Report statistics related to each pupil's attendance on a pupil's Annual Report in the summer term.
- Awarded 'Sammy the Squirrel' to classes in the younger years to look after for the following week if their class has the best attendance.

- Award pupils in KS1 and KS2 with excellent attendance the chance to win prizes in order to promote and reward excellent attendance and weekly classes with the best attendance are awarded a trophy.

The Governing Body will:

- Monitor attendance/absence/punctuality in a strategic manner as required by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Ensure a clear policy and guidance is applied fairly by the Headteacher.
- Set attendance targets.
- Take responsibility, through the Curriculum and Community Committee, the monitoring of attendance.

Parents/Carers should:

- Ensure the regular attendance of your child/ren and work in partnership with the school where there are difficulties.
- Ensure that child/ren arrive at and are collected from school on time.
- Inform the school by telephone on 01895 634180 or 01895 634318 before 9.30am, on the first day of your child's absence, by sending an email to the school office email address – absence@ladybankes.school or by sending the school a text to Eduspot 'teachers to parents' stating your child's name and class. You must call every day that your child is absent.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for your child/ren who we will also get in touch with if we are not able to make contact with the parent/ carer on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that appointments are, wherever possible, taken outside of the school day. Siblings should attend school.
- Seek support if you have any concerns about your child's attendance that you would like to discuss by contacting Mrs Sue Smith, the Attendance Officer, via the office@ladybankes.school or by calling the school numbers to make an appointment.
- Submit a written request in advance for any planned absences. Exceptional Leave Forms are available from school via the reception and a meeting will be arranged.
- Ensure your child/ren arrive at school on time. School starts at 8.30am and children will receive a late mark if they arrive at school after the main gates are closed at 8.40am. Children who arrive at school after 8.40am will need to be brought into the main reception area and report to the Reception staff. You will need to complete a late form. Lateness after 9.30 a.m. which has no valid reason will be marked as unauthorised.
- If your child is persistently late you will be asked to meet with the class teacher/Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

RECORDING ATTENDANCE AT LADY BANKES PRIMARY SCHOOL

The attendance of all pupils at Lady Bankes Primary School is recorded on an electronic register. Registers are taken at the start of the school day and at the start of the afternoon sessions. The school uses the national attendance codes:

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

We also record:

- If the absence is authorised or not for pupils of compulsory school age
- The activity where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The circumstances why a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or exceptional. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- trips in term time which have not been agreed as exceptional leave by the headteacher
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. In situations like this any problems with regular attendance should be discussed as quickly as possible with the school.

FOLLOWING UP UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES

If any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops without any reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of an unexplained absence to try to establish the reason. If the school is not able to make contact with the parent or other emergency contacts the school may contact the 'Stronger Families Hub' or the police.
- Identify if the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason is established.
- Call the parent each day that the absence continues without explanation- taking safeguarding action where necessary.

- Offer support to the pupil and their family, if appropriate, to improve attendance or to obtain support from other agencies.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ATTENDANCE

Approval for term-time absences

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/made#:~:text=11.,an%20%E2%80%9Cauthorised%20person%E2%80%9D\).&text=\(b\)regulated%20employment%20abroad.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/made#:~:text=11.,an%20%E2%80%9Cauthorised%20person%E2%80%9D).&text=(b)regulated%20employment%20abroad.)

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

It is at the headteacher's discretion to grant a leave of absence, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The school defines 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable. Examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral or a housing crisis.

A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request for exceptional leave should be submitted as soon as possible and, where possible, at least 10 days before the absence. Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are exceptional circumstances. Holidays are not considered exceptional.

Requests for leave must also be made to the school in advance, as the Department for Education has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- Any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

PERFORMANCE LICENCE REQUESTS

The Headteacher will look at each individual request for a Performance Licence as we encourage children to follow the school rule of 'Be Talented' and this can be an excellent learning experience for them. With this in mind it is essential that a child's attendance is at least above 90% and they are making expected levels of progress.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

A child's attendance causes concern when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason and this is deemed as persistent absence. Attendance that is 50% or less is severe absence. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement consequence, where necessary

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Extract from Lady Banks Primary School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy: *'Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. If a child goes missing from education that may be a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.'*

THE ATTENDANCE SUPPORT TEAM

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Support Team in the Local Authority. Every school has a named Attendance Support Officer and he/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist families may be issued with a penalty notice.

PENALTY NOTICES

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice. If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

PUPILS ABSENT DUE TO MENTAL OR PHYSICAL ILLNESS OR SEND

The school will:

- Make contact with the pupil and a family member before they start back to discuss their concerns and an integration plan as appropriate agreed which could include slowly increasing contact time back in school for a short period to be kept under review. This can help alleviate anxiety. As appropriate an update meeting may be organised to complete an Individual Healthcare Plan.
- Request support from medical or hospital school staff and or liaise with the school nurse.
- Ensure that all staff who need to know, are informed of the effects of the medical condition on the pupil, and who should be contacted if the pupil falls ill while at school or on a school outing.
- Discuss a realistic plan for catching up on missed work, this should be monitored and evaluated after a set period. This is particularly important for students working towards exams.
- Look out for any changes in quality of work and overall behaviour. Consult with parent / carer and pupil early on if there are any concerns.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy

- Behaviour Policy
- Children With Health Needs Who Cannot Attend School Policy
- Medical Policy

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Needs, Head teacher

Mrs Smith, Attendance Officer

Governing Body Curriculum and Community Committee

Hillingdon Attendance Support Officers