



**The Levels Academy Trust**

**Raising Aspirations, Realising Potential TOGETHER**

## **Attendance Policy**

**Date adopted: 4 July 2018**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review date: July 2020**

The Levels Academy comprises four schools, namely:

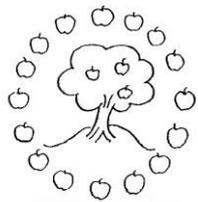
Hambridge Primary School (including Little Levels Pre-School)  
Huish Episcopi Primary School  
Middlezoy Primary School  
Othery Village School (including Hatchlings Pre-School)

This policy has been reviewed to cover each of the above schools.



# Attendance Policy

Adopted by all the Huish Community Learning Partnership Primary Schools



Learning Together  
Kingsbury Episcopi



## **1. Aims and Targets**

Schools within the Levels Academy Trust believe that regular attendance is important for pupils to take full advantage of the educational provision made available to them. Irregular attendance is likely to place the child at an educational disadvantage. As a school, therefore, we aim to pursue the goal of regular pupil attendance and it is recognised that the partnership between school and home is important. Our school aims to develop children to their full potential. Parents have a responsibility to aid the education process by ensuring that their children attend school regularly, on time, properly dressed and in the right mood to learn. We expect our parents to value school and their children's education and to support our school's rules.

**Our expected level of attendance is 95%.**

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

The school has a partnership agreement with the Educational Welfare Service and is allocated an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will work with the school, children and families to improve and secure good school attendance.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school.

It is the responsibility of the LA and the school to promote good attendance at school and to have systems in place to keep accurate records of school attendance.

The school endorses a partnership approach between school management, governors, parents and pupils.

## **3 School Session Times**

3.1 The LA school terms and holiday dates for Community schools and Academies will be adopted.

3.2 The Governing Body will decide when sessions should begin and end on each school day.

3.3 Guidance on weekly lesson times (excluding collective worship, registrations and breaks) recommends:

21 hours for pupils aged 5 to 7

23½ hours for 8 to 11 year olds

3.4 The information will be available to parents and others in the school prospectus.

3.5 Details of when changes to the school day can be made are detailed in Guidance for Schools.

3.6 Before making changes, the Governing Body will consult the LA, the Headteacher and school staff.

## **4 Registration Procedures**

4.1 There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions, pupils are marked present, absent, or attending an "approved education activity". The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 introduced a further requirement that attendance registers must show

whether an absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. It must also record the nature of any “approved educational activity”.

Where an absence was initially recorded as unauthorised, the register can be amended to reflect that a satisfactory explanation was subsequently provided. The amendment must be made so that the correction is clear.

4.2 The school expects both staff and pupils to see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day. Particular attention will be paid to accurate registration and to the preservation and security of registers.

4.3 Hambridge Primary School:

Register marks will be entered using the SIMS Attendance module by the class teacher or the classroom assistant twice daily: at 9.00am in the morning and at 1.30pm at the start of the afternoon session. A 'late but arrived before the register had closed' (L) mark will be recorded for children who arrive after registration has taken place but before registers have closed (9.10am) A pupil will have a 'late and arrived after the register had closed' (U) mark and an unauthorised absence if they arrive after 9.10am. Any child arriving after registration must report to the school office.

Huish Episcopi Primary School:

Register marks will be entered using the SIMS Attendance module by the class teacher or the classroom assistant twice daily: at 09.00 in the morning and at 1:25pm at the start of the afternoon session. A 'late but arrived before the register had closed' (L) mark will be recorded for children who arrive after registration has taken place but before registers have closed (9.10am). A pupil will have a 'late and arrived after the register had closed' (U) mark and an unauthorised absence if they arrive after 9.10am. Any child arriving after registration must report to the school office.

Middlezoy and Othery Schools:

Register marks will be entered using the SIMS Attendance module by the class teacher or the classroom assistant twice daily: at 8.45am (Middlezoy) and 9am (Othery) in the morning and at 1.00pm (Middlezoy) and 1.15 p.m. (Othery) at the start of the afternoon session. A 'late but arrived before the register had closed' (L) mark will be recorded for children who arrive after registration has taken place but before registers have closed (8.55am/9.10am) A pupil will have a 'late and arrived after the register had closed' (U) mark and an unauthorised absence if they arrive after 8.55/9.10am. Any child arriving after registration must report to the school office.

4.4 Teachers of pupils who persistently fail to arrive on time with valid reason should arrange a meeting with parents, whilst keeping the Head of School informed. If the parents do not have any valid reason for the child's persistent lateness, the school will consult the Education Welfare Officer. The teacher should make a written note of the discussion and the outcome. A copy of the note should be sent to the parent(s) and a copy kept on the child's file.

4.5 Manual registers, used when SIMS is unavailable, should be marked in black ink. Present is recorded as an oblique stroke / and the afternoon session marked in the reverse direction \. Absences are shown by N (and followed up by the office staff) for unauthorised absence and O with a symbol inside for authorised absence.

4.6 Every session will be accounted for, with no gaps left in the register. Standard codes for the recording of absences are attached as Appendix 1.

4.7 Alterations to the register will be recorded.

## **5 Recording and Authorising Absence**

- 5.1 The decision to authorise an absence and to record this in the register rests solely with the school. DfE Guidance 10/99 sets out reasons for an approved school activity. This is generally when pupils are receiving formal educational arrangements but not on school site.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school as early as possible on the first day of absence. However, if this does not occur, the school will contact parents or guardians by telephone on the first day of absence. If no response or adequate explanation is received from this contact, a letter will be sent to the parents/guardians on the child's return to school requesting a reason for the absence.
- 5.3 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 provides that no offence is committed where a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. If the school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence will be treated as authorised.
- 5.4 Where we have reason to doubt the validity of an explanation offered in respect of a particular absence, further information will be requested by the school from the child's parents. If the school continues to be dissatisfied then the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

5.5 Leave for medical or dental appointments will be given (i.e. the absence will be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parent (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointment card. A record will be maintained in the School Office of the times when children arrive late or leave early due to sickness or medical/dental appointments. If the school needs more information about a medical condition, or is not satisfied with a reason, consent is sought from the parent/carer to contact the GP directly. If permission is not given, the school will expect the parent/carer to provide necessary medical evidence themselves.

Where attendance falls below 90% parent/carer will be asked to provide a copy of the medical appointment and may be requested to provide evidence for all further absence due to illness.

5.6 Information on pupils' absences will be included in the Self Evaluation Form and reported to Governors annually.

## **6 Requests for leave of absence**

6.1 The Government has issued schools with new legislation which will only allow Head Teachers to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. If parents/carers make a request for holiday in term time it will only be authorised if the school deems that there are exceptional circumstances and reasons for this to happen.

Such exceptional circumstances may be:

- Where forces personnel are on leave from a foreign posting
- Where significant family events and circumstances occur such as bereavement.

In addition, the child must also have an exemplary school attendance level, have had no exclusions and not be at a critical phase in his/her school career i.e. near taking SATS or at the beginning of an academic year.

Applications must be made in advance, in writing to the Head Teacher, stating the exceptional circumstances with a minimum of 2 weeks' notice. If this is not possible an appointment must be made with the Head to discuss this in advance of the leave of absence.

6.2 Any unauthorised absence such as taking holidays in term time when they have not been approved by the school, may result in a Fixed Term Penalty Notice being issued by the Education Welfare Service. The Fixed Term Penalty Notice fees are currently £60 per parent per child.

## **7 Liaison with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

The school seeks to have good working relations with all external agencies, and the EWO has worked with the school in developing these procedures.

The EWO is in regular contact with the school to monitor poor attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies. The school will maintain a list of pupils with attendance below 95% as part of attendance monitoring.

### **EWO referral system**

Prior to the EWO involvement, schools are required to take the following steps:

- Send letter to parents/carers raising concerns about attendance.
- Invite parents into meeting if attendance remains a concern.
- Then a referral will be made to the EWO and parents will be informed

The school must supply the following documentation:

- Up to date register certificate
- Copies of letters
- Minutes of any meetings with the family

Depending on the type of referral, parents will receive either a Warning Penalty Notice, Penalty Notice or invitation to a meeting from the EWO. In certain cases parents may be invited to a further meeting and in extreme cases there may be prosecution.

## Appendix 1

### Attendance Codes

<b>/</b>	<b>Present at AM registration</b>
<b>\</b>	<b>Present at PM registration</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Educated off-site (not dual registration)</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Excluded</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Family holiday (agreed)</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Illness</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Late (before registers closed)</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Medical/dental appointments</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>No reason yet provided for absence</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Approved sporting activity</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Religious observance</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Study leave</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Traveller absence</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>Late (after registers closed)</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>Educational visit or trip</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Work experience (not work based training)</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Non-compulsory school-age absence</b>
<b>-</b>	<b>All should attend / no mark recorded</b>



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Name of School:

## NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO TAKE HOLIDAY IN TERM TIME

I/we wish to inform the school that it is our intention to take our child/children on holiday during term time.

Name of child/children: .....

Class/es: .....

Dates of absence: .....

Reason this absence needs to be in the school term:

.....  
.....

Name of Parent/Carer: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Absence can only be authorised if there are 'exceptional circumstances'

### **Definitions and examples of 'exceptional circumstances'**

The Department for Education guidance is that although it is not possible to define exceptional circumstances, examples of what might be considered as such are:

- Service personnel returning from/scheduled to embark on a tour of duty abroad
- When it is company policy for an employee to take leave only at a specified time in the year (evidence required)
- Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue (evidence required)

## Appendix 3- First contact letter of concern



# The Levels Academy Trust

**Raising Aspirations, Realising Potential TOGETHER**

Name of School:

Dear

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor attendance on a regular basis and identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. We then issue a first letter to register this concern with parents. We are therefore writing to you due to\*\*\*\*\* current level of attendance:

Overall School Attendance	****
Of which Authorised Absence is	*****
Of which Unauthorised Absence is	*****

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

<b>Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year</b> Excellent attendance! These pupils 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.
<b>95%: 10 days absence a year</b> 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.
<b>90%: 19 days absence a year</b> Pupils in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
<b>85%: 29 days absence a year</b> Pupils in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; it will be very difficult for them to keep up with work and they are unlikely to do their best.
<b>80%: 38 days absence a year</b> The Government classes pupils in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of pupils 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 me.

Yours sincerely

Name of Head of School  
**Head of School**

## Appendix 3 – request for medical evidence



# The Levels Academy Trust

Raising Aspirations, Realising Potential TOGETHER

Dear

I am writing to you as I am getting concerned with **Child Name's** high level of absence from school and I would like to know if there is anything that the school can do to assist you in improving this.

We have been contacted by the Education Attendance Officer (EAO) who has asked that we request the following in order to authorise any further illness or absence for appointments:-

- Evidence of **all** future medical appointments with times clearly stated (if appointments are made verbally then please obtain an appointment card from the receptionist at the appointment)
- Evidence of any Doctors' appointments (we are NOT asking for a traditional 'Drs letter' simply a copy of an appointment card which a receptionist should be willing to provide for school)
- Evidence of any medication prescribed (the tear off slip that accompanies the prescription for example). If **Child's name** is taking medication during the school day then this is clearly all the evidence required.

We are sorry but we will be unable to 'authorise' any more time off sick for **Child's name** unless you are able to provide the evidence listed above.

I hope that you fully understand that we want to support **Child's name** in any way that we can and ensure that **he/she** gets a full and rewarding education during **his/her** time at Kingsbury. **Child's name's** current attendance level **xx%** is which equates to nearly **XX** days off school in every week.

Please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see me if you need any assistance with anything mentioned in this letter and please can I reiterate that we are here to support **Child's name** and **his/her** continuing education in any way that we can.

Yours sincerely



# The Levels Academy Trust

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Date

Name/address

Dear

## **TERM TIME LEAVE - UNAUTHORISED**

Many thanks for your term time leave request. As you are probably aware, Government guidelines have recently changed with regards to granting leave during term time. We are now strongly advised not to allow term time leave except under very exceptional circumstances.

The guidance and exceptional circumstances only allow for leave for specific professions, such as returning armed forces persons, fire fighters, police who are directed when they can or cannot take leave and family issues such as terminally ill family member etc. Account may also be taken of a student's prior attendance record.

Having examined your request I am unable to authorise this leave as an exceptional circumstance. Should you choose to take this leave it will have to be coded as an unauthorised absence and the Educational Attendance Officer may choose to take further actions.

As a school we will be following the authority's current process in improving attendance and a penalty notice could/will be applied for your child has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 12 week period.

If you would like to discuss this please make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely

Name

**Head of School**



# The Levels Academy Trust

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Date

Name/address

Dear

## **TERM TIME LEAVE - AUTHORISED**

Many thanks for your term time leave request. As you are probably aware Government guidelines have recently changed with regards to granting leave during term time. As school we are now strongly advised not to allow term time leave except under very exceptional circumstances for which guidance is laid down and is given on our website.

Having examined your request it is clear to me that there are exceptional circumstances in your case and I am therefore able to authorise the leave. I would appreciate it if you could encourage your son/daughter to ensure they collect work prior to this departure and also that they commit to catching up with any other missed work on their return.

Should the leave be extended for any reason, the extension may be regarded as unauthorised absence which may be used in any legal action for poor attendance.

As a school we will be following the authority's current process in improving attendance and a penalty notice could/will be applied for your child has at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 12 week period.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

Name

**Head of School**