# Attendance Policy

## Introduction

Good attendance and punctuality at school is important and ensures continuous learning.

School encourages good attendance through making the school day and pupils’ learning enjoyable and engaging. We aim to encourage a positive attitude to school to nurture learning in all pupils. Children need to feel that their contribution in school is valued and all staff care about them as individuals.

## Aims:-

* At Leeming we aim to achieve 100% attendance for as many pupils as possible, whilst recognising that there are occasionally unavoidable illnesses etc. preventing this.
* We value punctuality and regular school attendance, knowing that it has a direct impact on attainment and progress
* We will ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and that no child is deprived of opportunity by their own or others’ non-attendance.
* We know that working in partnership with parents is key to promoting good attendance and punctuality.
* We acknowledge that the procedures at the start and end of the school day have a substantial influence on pupils’ attitudes and readiness for learning.
* We believe that pupils are more likely to be good attendees when attendance is monitored and absences are followed up swiftly

## Legal Position

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

## Possible Reasons for Absence

The following are considered to be potential reasons for absence:

### Illness

We recognise that pupils do sometimes fall ill, and that there are various public health guidelines about children staying away from school for certain illnesses (e.g. 48hours after the last incident of diarrhoea or vomiting).

Children are still expected to attend school with minor ailments. If the class teacher feels your child is too unwell to participate in learning, we will contact you to collect your child. Attending for part of a day is better than not attending at all and this sets a good example to children of what is expected. We are able to administer prescribed medication during the school day. It is important that you do not keep your child off school due to needing antibiotics or other prescribed medication unless a medical professional or school staff have advised that your child needs to remain at home until the medication takes effect.

However, where a child is frequently ill, and particularly if there are patterns to this, or a child is ill for a prolonged period, school may follow this up and request medical information and/or a referral to the healthy child team.

### Medical appointments

We request and expect that, wherever possible, medical / dental appointments are made outside of school time. However, we do recognise that health services are stretched and may not be able to reschedule such appointments – on these occasions, pupils’ absences will be authorised. Evidence of the appointment (e.g. Dr.’s letter, outpatient appointment notice etc.) will usually be requested.

### Temporary Part-Time Timetable

These will very occasionally be set up, by agreement with parents, to allow a pupil to temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons. This would normally be as part of the provision for SEND pupils or those with profound medical needs where this has been recommended by an external professional.

### Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances (LoAEC)

The school can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances. This is at the discretion of the school, but DfE guidance is clear that such circumstances are very limited in their scope. LoAEC must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with or with whom they live for part of their time.

In determining LoAEC, the first criteria which will be considered is whether the application constitutes an ‘exceptional circumstance’. Full details can be found in Appendix A of this policy, which also covers the specific challenges faced by our school’s military context.

## Reporting of Absences

### Illness

Parents are asked to inform the school office ***by 9am*** each day a child is unwell and will not be attending school.

A child who has been sick or who has diarrhoea should also be kept away from school until the child has been clear of the problem for 48 hours.

Medical/dental appointments should be made out of school hours, however where this is not possible the school will require notification prior to the absence. When a child is absent for a medical appointment it is expected that they will return to school immediately following the appointment.

Please contact the office for further guidance on specific illnesses & required length of absence.

It is crucial that parents adhere to this procedure to ensure that all pupils are safe and their whereabouts accounted for.

### Long term Absences

Occasionally, some pupils experience health or other difficulties that prevent them from attending school for some time. School deals with each case individually, agreeing procedures for re-integrating these pupils with each family as the need arises. Please contact the Headteacher if your child would benefit from such an arrangement.

### Registration and Lateness Procedures

A registration system is in place to record, in an accurate manner, attendance, lateness and absences. This complies with Government and L.A. guidelines.

* School’s official starting time is **8:50am** (8:45 for Y5/6)
* Any child arriving after this time may therefore be registered with a late mark.
* Pupils arriving after this time should report to the school office as they will be required to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness.
* If a child arrives after registration closes (9.15am for all pupils) they will usually be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session. *Note – this is based on the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations and could be used as evidence against parents if legal action were to be considered by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.*

### Recording and use of Absence Data

When a child fails to attend school for one or more sessions this will be recorded as an absence. Unless informed of the absence previously by a parent/guardian, the admin team will phone home from 9am on the morning that a child is not in school. Absences will be shown as authorised or unauthorised, following authority guidelines. The school determines whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised using these guidelines.

When absences are unaccounted for, school will telephone and/or send a message home to try to ensure all absences are explained.

Data is collected and subsequently collated. Attendance figures are published for individual pupils in their school report and/or at the end of each term. Where pupils’ attendance causes concern the parameters and procedures as shown in the Pupils’ Punctuality and Attendance Policy Statement will be followed (Appendix B) and shared with Local Authority Educational Social Workers / members of the Early Help Team. Attendance information is passed on when pupils transfer to other schools.

## LoAEC, additional Information

The Department for Education requires Local Authorities to implement government regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-time. The law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

**Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Therefore Headteachers will only be able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will still be at the discretion of the Headteacher.**

**No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.**

The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Application forms are available from your child’s school. Headteachers will also welcome early discussion with you around potential applications.

Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the ‘experience’ offered by being out of school. Where a headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

**Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.**

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. **Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the headteacher.** If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

*For full details of LoAEC criteria, guidance and evidence requirements are found in Appendix A.*

### Absences for part of the day

From time to time, pupils show symptoms of illness at school. School will contact parents and other family members if a child needs to go home. School asks parents to ensure we have up to date contact names and telephone numbers for this purpose.

Parents are informed that they should not send children to school who seem very unwell. Pupils who are ill are often very distressed and illnesses are quickly spread.

### In the event of School Closure

During winter months it occasionally becomes necessary to close the school due to adverse weather conditions. If this closure takes place at the start of the day, parents will be notified via text message / other appropriate system. If the weather or other conditions mean that a decision is taken to close school during the school day parents and guardians will be texted or telephoned and asked to collect their children as soon as possible. The school staff will remain on the premises until all children have been collected.

# APPENDIX A: Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

## Legislation

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and ‘[Working together to improve school attendance, 2024](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf)’ state that attendance at school is compulsory. This legislation makes clear that **headteachers may not grant any leave** of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Specifically, the legislation states that *“the DfE does* ***not*** *consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.*”

Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Examples of where Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances (LoAEC) *may* be granted include:

* Service Personnel leaving / returning from active deployment (usually one or the other, see additional information below)
* Where inflexibility of the parents’ leave is part of the organisation or company policy, and where it can be proven that *no leave can be taken during school holidays*.
* Where leave is recommended as part of parents’ or child’s rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence would need to be provided.
* When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
* A one-off never to be repeated occasion that can only take place at the time requested.
  + This refers to events with set dates, such as an immediate family wedding, funeral etc. It does not cover: holidays linked to family get togethers, visits to family across the country, ‘once in a lifetime’ trips etc.

Taking leave during term time means that children miss important school time – both educationally and for other school activities. Before completing this application parents/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child’s continuity of education. Please ensure that your application fits one of the above criteria before applying and that you attach sufficient supporting documentary evidence if required/requested.

### The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations

Amendments have been made to Penalty Notice regulations, these can be found here: [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/210).

The legislation states that:

“A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution:

* The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
* A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.”

**Note, these fines are per child, per parent. Therefore, a weeks’ holiday for a family of 5 would lead to a fine of £960.**

The prohibitions in legislation regarding holidays unfortunately include parents requesting LoAEC for holidays in quieter periods to support children with additional needs. If parents feel that their child will struggle, please contact school who may be able to offer signposting, advice and guidance as to strategies that could help with this – for example securing priority boarding for flights, holidaying in the UK, accessible sites, autism-friendly resorts and locations etc.

## Leeming School Military Context and Evidencing Need

We are very aware that our school is in a unique context being based behind the wire, and that therefore, service issues will sometimes precipitate the need for exceptional leave of absence – such as visiting a new school before a posting, challenges relating to spousal deployment, living away from support networks etc. We wish to recognise these additional challenges, and make provision for them where possible, so are introducing a ‘service linked’ category for leave of absence requests (see form – please tick if the absence is specifically linked to the challenge of service life).

However, the mobility, change and disruption of service life (even pupils who, themselves, do not move, experience this all around them) makes good attendance *even more important*. Research has shown that service pupils generally experience more academic challenges around gaps in learning etc. than their peers, and therefore any further absence will exacerbate this.

For this reason, we will be requesting evidence be provided to support leave of absence requests.

We will endeavour to continue to retain a pastoral understanding of the challenges that our families face when considering whether or not a request for Leave of Absence will be authorised, whilst also emphasising the vital importance of being in school to ensure the best educational provision for all pupils. If you have any questions, please contact the school directly and discuss these.

### Deployment Leave

We recognise that spending time together as a family to connect with one another when service personnel leave for or return from active deployment is incredibly important. Equally however, research evidence suggests that multiple disruptions to routines are negative to children’s wellbeing, and that where possible, maintaining consistency and normality is key to children navigating periods of transition and change.

When considering whether to grant pre/post-deployment leave, the following criteria will factor in to the school’s decision:

* The duration of the deployment
* Whether additional Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances (LoAEC) has already been granted within the last 12 months
* The overall absence profile of the child
* The proximity of return to other school holidays
  + For instance, if a parent returns from deployment a few days before Easter break, it would be unlikely that an extended LoAEC would be granted, as a holiday/time together could take place in the usual school vacation period.
* The proximity of the requested leave to the deployment
  + For instance, requesting a LoAEC for ‘family time after deployment’ would usually be considered *within the term* of that parent’s return. It would not usually be applied a few months after the parent’s return, as other school holidays would have taken place in the meantime.
* Whether the LoAEC clashes with national examinations (e.g. SATs)
* The duration of the requested leave

In all instances of service / deployment linked LoAEC requests, evidence from line manager (SNCO or above) will be required. If this cannot be secured in advance of the Leave Request (e.g. service personnel are away and spouse has no contact with CoC) then please discuss this with the headteacher - *provisional authorisation will likely be given subject to evidence being provided as soon as possible*. If it is later found that the form presented inaccurate information, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## Application Form: Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

I am requesting exceptional leave of absence for the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name(s)** |  | |
| **Class(es)** |  | |
| **Dates:** | From: | To: |
| **Number of school days missed** |  | |

### Reason

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Please tick** | **Service Linked?** | **Evidence required?** |
| 1. Service Personnel leaving / returning from active deployment |  |  | Letter 1 (signed) |
| 2. Inflexibility of the parents’ leave is part of the organisation or company policy |  |  | Letter 2 (signed) |
| 3. Leave recommended as part of parents’ or child’s rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. |  |  | Clinician Letter |
| 4. When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis. |  |  | Details below. |
| 5. One off, never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested\* |  |  | Case by case. |

\* N.B. Category 5 refers to events with set dates, such as an immediate family wedding, medal ceremony etc. It does *not* cover: holidays linked to family get togethers, visits to family across the country, ‘once in a lifetime’ trips etc.

### Details (for any category)

Please provide details below. If additional evidence is required (see above), please obtain this as well.

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Signature of parent/carer………………………………….. Date………………..

### Review by Headteacher

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Authorised?** |  |
| **Category / Reason /  Notes** |  |
| **Signed** |  |

Parents will be notified of the outcome of this request via School Ping.   
Office use only:  Response sent (ping)  Paperwork filed  Register updated

## Letter 1: Service Deployment (Category 1)

This should be completed by a line manager responsible for staffing (SNCO or above).\*

Dear Headteacher,

*Please tick:*

I am writing to confirm that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is due to deploy / be away from home for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ months shortly.  
OR:

I am writing to confirm that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ will be returning from a deployment / period away from home of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ months shortly.

Therefore, please consider granting a term time leave of absence for their child(ren), to enable them to spend valuable family time together linked to this period of deployment.

Best regards,

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## Letter 2: Inflexibility of Leave (Category 2)

This should be completed by a line manager responsible for staffing. If this is a service request, it should be completed by SNCO or above.\*

Dear Headteacher,

I am writing to confirm that as a result of company / organisation policy, leave requests are inflexible. This means that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is unable to take leave during the school holidays

I provide further details below: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Therefore, please consider granting a term time leave of absence for their child(ren), to enable them to spend family time together.

Best regards,

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\*If this cannot be completed at time of application (e.g. personnel already away and no contact with CoC) then please discuss this with the headteacher as authorisation may be granted provisionally subject to evidence being provided at a later date.

## APPENDIX B - Policy statement – Pupils’ Punctuality and Attendance

(To be read in conjunction with DfE and NYCC policy statements)

The highest standards of attendance and punctuality are encouraged for all pupils at all times. Where a child’s attendance causes concern, the following parameters and actions will be considered by the Headteacher:

(Each case will be considered individually based on circumstances)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cause for concern | Action(s) to be considered\* |
| 95% attendance or below at any point within an academic year | * Attendance will be monitored by the School and attendance history considered * Contact with parents/carers if deemed necessary |
| 90% attendance or below at any point within an academic year | * Initial low-stakes contact from admin team to parents to alert to fall in attendance * Letter to parents/carers asking them to work with school to improve attendance * Discussion with parents/carers to develop a plan of action |
| 85% attendance or below at any point within an academic year | * Letter of concern * Formal discussions with Headteacher * Discussion with Early Help Team re possible referral for consideration within NYCC policy and practice guidance |
| Repeated incidences of illness-related absence | * Discussion with parents/carers * Referral to school nurse * Request that parents/carers provide proof of doctor’s involvement (appointment card with child’s name on / letter / copy of prescription etc) * Work for the pupil might be sent home to be completed |
| Repeated arrival at school after 9am | This will be marked in the class register as a LATE.   * Letter to parents/carers requesting that the matter is addressed and offering support * An action plan to be established * Consideration of request from outside agencies |
| Repeated arrival at school after 9.20am | This will be marked in the class register as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE for the session.   * An action plan to be established * Consideration of request from outside agencies * Referral to the Education Social Worker / Early Help Team for consideration within NYCC policy and practice guidelines |

\* Action taken will be proportionate according to nature of absences. For example 8% absence all of which is unauthorised would likely yield a different set of actions to 8% linked to protracted illness, hospital treatment etc.