



Attendance Policy & Improvement Plan

Date policy last reviewed	September 2021
Consultation process	This policy has been developed and implemented in consultation with the whole school community including students, parents/guardians, staff, and partner agencies.
Person responsible	Ms. Denise Williams (SENCO)
Next review date	August 2022

SIGNATURES

Student (via the Student Council)

.....

Parent (via the HSA) ...

.....

DES Senior School Improvement Officer/ Chair of Governors

.....

School leader

.....

This document has been written in line with Ed. Law, 2016, Regulation 2017, DES policy, ASCAC 2018 and the Cayman Islands Secondary, Primary & Special Schools Attendance Improvement Plan (Revised 2019)

Lighthouse School understands that good attendance is crucial to raise standards of student attainment and to give every student the best opportunity at achieving their fullest potential.

For our students to maximise their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's educational opportunities and experiences, while regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Any student's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a culture of regular attendance is primarily the responsibility of parents. It is also the responsibility of students and all members of school staff to ensure regular attendance.

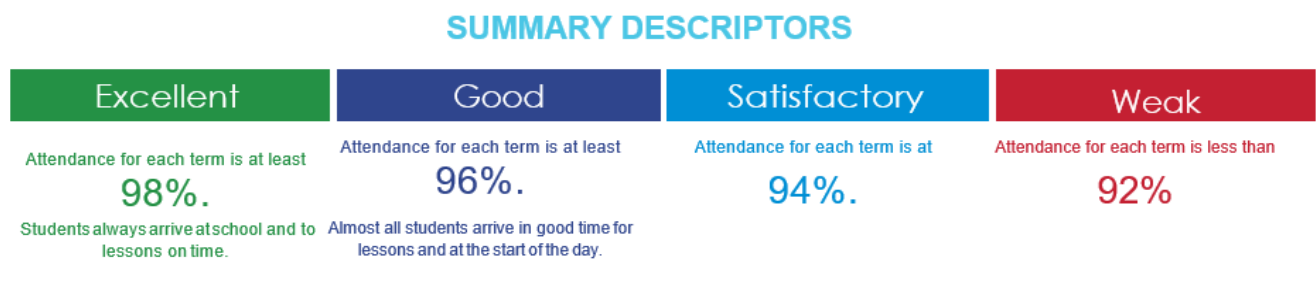
Therefore, we aim to work in partnership with parents/guardians:

- To promote and maintain high levels of attendance
- To promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- To ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- To promote a welcoming atmosphere in which students feel safe, secure and valued
- To raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- To ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

And to address the needs of students who:

- have levels of attendance below expected
- exhibit behaviours consistent with low levels of student engagement and poor attendance
- are disengaging from school because they do not perceive their academic courses as worthwhile or engaging

The Office for Education Standards (OES) defines attendance as:



Our target at Lighthouse School is to have

SATISFACTORY (94%)

or better attendance.

While 94% attendance or better is our target, we do recognise that many of our students present with unique medical and behavioural challenges that can adversely affect individual's attendance and overall school attendance targets

Nevertheless, we will endeavour to achieve this by through the following processes:

- Continuously monitor attendance and lateness through SIMS
- Analyse attendance data daily, weekly, monthly, termly and yearly to identify patterns that are cause for concern e.g. target students or classes and to plan action to address the issues
- Decrease the number of students, who misses ten or more sessions of school during a school term by 50%
- Decrease the number of students who are persistently absent
- Decrease the number of students who are persistently late by 50% by mid-year

Parents / Guardian Responsibilities:

We believe that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

By permitting absence from school without a good reason parents can create an offence in law which may result in prosecution (Education Law, 2016, Section 12 (2)).

Parents have a duty to inform the school as to the reason for any absence. Therefore, if a child is absent from school the parent/guardian is expected to follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8:00 *am*. E-mail, call or call into school personally and speak to the admin team
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8:00*am*
- Ensure that your child returns to school as he/she is well enough to do so
- On return, if the absence is 2 or more days, or we have a valid concern about your child's overall levels of absence you will be asked to provide medical evidence to explain the absence.

It the responsibility of parents / guardians to contact us regarding all absences

If your child is absent the school will:

- If we have not heard from you by 9.30 am then we will start to call using the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence.
- If we still have not been able to ascertain why your child is absent and we have a concern, we may report the concern to relevant agencies as your child could then be classed as a 'missing child'.
- Write to you if your child's attendance is below *94% or 4 Days*.
- Invite you in to the school to discuss the situation with our Special Needs Education Coordinator, Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the DES and request a formal School Attendance Meeting if attendance deteriorates following the above actions

Roles and Responsibilities**Staff assignments**

The Principal is responsible for implementation, monitoring and reporting of attendance procedures under the Education Law 2016/Regulations.

The following staff under the supervision of the Principal will have day to day oversight and administration of the systems and processes designed to monitor attendance and address any issues that may arise:

- Deputy Principal (DP) - Authorized to change attendance codes (see Appendix 1), oversight of attendance and identify any students/ classes that are cause for concern – daily / weekly
- Executive Officer (EO) – ensure registers are complete in a timely manner twice daily (am/pm), monitor attendance and be aware of any students who is for concern – ongoing
- Classroom Teachers- monitor attendance by communicating cause of concern to attendance coordinator (DP)
- School Inclusion Specialist (SIS) – to monitor students of concern
- School Counsellor (SC / CPO) – monitoring any children with CP concerns

School Base Support Team (Monthly) / Attendance Team

Deputy Principal, SENCO, School Counsellor and School Inclusion Specialist will meet monthly to analyse student attendance data, discuss concerns and next steps.

Where Codes “N” or “O” or missing marks are found teachers will be encouraged to contact parents to have the absence explained. This data will in turn be considered by the SBST.

Illness vs Reluctance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child.

If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the the reluctance and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse, School Counsellor, School Inclusion Specialist or DCFS.

Persistent Absenteeism / Absence (PA)

A student is defined as a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child’s education and we need a parent/carer’s fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark we will inform the parent/carer.

LHS students are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects progress and attainment. All our PA students and their parents are subject to a school-based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, School Counsellor, School Inclusion Specialist or a Social and Family Support Worker. We may also use class teaching, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities to support us in raising attendance i.e. Breakfast Club

Notifications, Sanctions and Rewards

The school will use a variety of communication measures (e.g., meetings between the principal and student; phone calls; letters; etc.) to inform parents about their son or daughter’s attendance and to connect students and families with resources that support improved attendance.

Where monitoring shows that a student has been absent for a total of 2 or 5 days (**not necessarily consecutive days**) Lighthouse School will use the following notifications. This pattern of notification will continue as needed for students who are missing an increasing number of school days with either no reason given or no communication from home to explain the absence. Where there has been a prolonged or a pattern of regular non-attendance is indicated the parent will be called to meet with the Deputy Principal to discuss the attendance issues.

2 Days = 4 Sessions (Unauthorized/Code “O” or “N” – no reason given or no contact from home) Phone Call from Class Teacher / EO / VP - Parent will receive a phone call from the school indicating that the student has missed days of school for any reason other than an established illness, **these might not be consecutive days**. Where code “N” establish reason for absence. Remind the parent of the importance of regular school attendance. Parents must provide a medical note on return to school. **The same response applies for 3 days.**

4 Days = 8 Sessions (Unauthorized/Code “O” or “N” – no reason given or no contact from home) Phone Call, Official School Letter, and Meeting - Parent will receive a phone call from the Deputy Principal informing them that their son or daughter has missed 4 days of school for any reason, other than an established illness **these might not be consecutive days**. An official school letter will be sent home from the school requiring that the parent meet (school meeting) with the school’s deputy principal to discuss supports that can be provided to facilitate improved attendance as part of an “attendance contract.” Note the letter must also warn that 5+ days results in automatic referral to DES Attendance and Truancy Services.

5+ Days = 10 + Sessions (Unauthorized/Code “O” or “N” – no reason given or no contact from home)

DES Attendance and Truancy Services – Students who miss 5 or more unauthorized (consecutive) days of school are automatically referred to the DES Attendance and Truancy Services Officer via (Form AT1001AB Referral/Intervention).

Welfare

Where there has been a prolonged (5+ days in total) or a pattern of regular non-attendance is indicated and ‘illness’ is the stated reason the case must be carefully considered by the school team to judge whether any action needs to be taken. The team will look for patterns of days, medical notes / evidence and consider the reasonableness of the reason given. The team will look at how the student can be supported and attendance improved. The School Counsellor will be key to this discussion.

Home Visit (Optional) – The deputy principal or the learning mentor or the school counsellor may conduct a home visit to meet with the student’s parents, assess barriers to school attendance, and develop a plan to improve the student’s attendance.

The school will work with students and their parents to identify supports that would enable the student to attend class regularly. The work may include home visits, office visits, and truancy hearings at DES, collaboration with other government agencies, departments and Ngo’s.

Additionally, and where applicable, it may require DES to make an application for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) for the student, or where necessary the court may levy a fine against the parent or legal guardian for non-compliance with the Education Law 2016 and its Regulations.

HSA: Open-house presentation to parents and families

The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide a presentation to parents attending the schools fall and spring Home School Association meeting. The presentation will summarize the risk factors associated with chronic absenteeism, note the resources available at the school to improve student attendance, and describe the risks associated with poor attendance.

Monthly Class Attendance Award

The Deputy Principal will publish a monthly league table of attendance by class with a prize for the class that has best overall attendance. Special recognition will be given to a class that has 100% attendance.

Attendance Certificates

Each month students with 100% attendance will receive a certificate. They will also receive a free dress down the Tuesday following the monthly staff meeting. Students with 100% attendance for the year will receive an award at their respective year group awards ceremony.

Reporting Individual Attendance

Report to parents/carers termly on their child's attendance with the termly school report. Attendance will be available in real time on Everest the parent Portal. Where attendance is a concern this will be raised at parent conference and through direct contact.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although parents may be asked to provide medical evidence before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given.

Unauthorised absence includes, however is not exhaustive:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- absences which have never been properly explained
- shopping trips

- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- their own or family birthdays
- holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional circumstances' by the Principal
- day trips
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

...being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short".

By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Lateness and Punctuality

All students should be present at school for lessons to begin at 8.00am. Student's arriving after 8.30 will be marked as late with this mark remaining on their attendance record. Parents will be asked to explain frequent or persistent lateness to **school**. Please refer to Appendix 2 to understand the dramatic impact frequent or persistent lateness has on attendance and the time and opportunities lost.

Poor punctuality impacts learning in much the same way as absence. Persistent chronic absence particularly so.

If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day.

Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness and punctuality:

The school day starts at 8.00 am when children enter the building.

Registers are to be completed by 9.00 am / 1.30pm for AM and PM sessions.

Students arriving after 8.40 am will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in class by this time. This will be updated to an absence code if it subsequently established they are not coming to school.

Children arriving after 8.30 am are required to come in to school via the front desk if accompanied by a parent or carer, the parent/carer will sign them into our 'Late Book' and provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded.

The school may send home 'an attendance concern letter' (Appendix 3) in order to keep parents and carers informed re lateness.

The attendance team will monitor lateness and patterns of lateness.

At 9.30 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them as unauthorised absence (Code 'O') unless explanation is provided, and where required, documentation to support the explanation. On explanation, and where necessary, provision of documentation attendance code can/will be changed accordingly.

We expect parents and staff to encourage and support good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. The only exception to this is if a child is excluded or absent for medical grounds that prevent them from attending school. Parents are advised to read with their children and encourage continuing working towards their LSP targets during a period of absence.

Community and Legal Intervention

The Department of Education Services (DES) has established a partnership with the Attorneys General Office, Department of Children and Family Services and the Royal Cayman Islands Police. Students who are absent from school without an excuse 5 or more days are required to meet with representative from the school or the DES office of Attendance and Truancy Services to discuss their attendance and identify necessary supports.

The Attendance and Truancy Services Officer will require each student and their parents to sign a contract that stipulates what each part will do to improve attendance. In the event that the student violates the contract and misses school, a "Truancy Hearing" will be held to begin the referral process to the Department of Children and Family Services for review, and where necessary referred to the summary court to be placed on an Education Supervision order.

Evaluation and Assessment

To evaluate the absenteeism and truancy reduction efforts at our School, the DES will collect and monitor the following data. This data will be reviewed monthly, termly and annually.

- Total number of days absent for each student enrolled monthly, termly and annually.
- Total number of unauthorized absences (Code 'O' 'N'; per student per month, term, per year
- Total number of unauthorized absences (Code 'O') per class, per month, term, per school year
- Total number of students persistently absent (below 90% attendance)
- Total number of students with 94% attendance rate or above per month, term per school year
- Number of logged phone calls made to inform parents about their son or daughter's attendance per month, per term.
- Number of parental notifications sent in writing (filed copy) per month, per term.
- Number of logged parental meetings held to discuss student attendance per month, per term
- Number of Form A referrals with an attached intervention form forwarded to DES for investigation due to prolonged absences over five days, or where repeated Code 'N' absences have not meet the approved reasons as stated in Codes, B, E, I, P or W listed below or where patterns of unauthorized absences have been suspected and documented per month, per term.
- Number of supervision orders requested and granted per year.

Note:

Questions regarding this document should be submitted to:

Mrs. Gloria Bell – (gloria.bell@gov.ky) Acting Customer Service Manager

Appendix 1

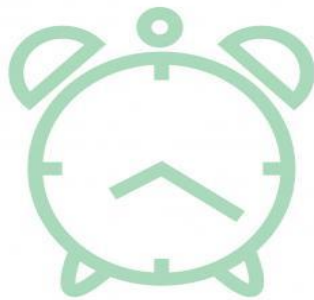
Approved Attendance Codes	
Code	Meaning
/\	Present AM/PM
L	Late after the bell
B	Educated off-site - This code should be used when students are present at an approved off-site educational activity.
E	Exclusion to home
I	Illness or other health issue that in the opinion of a medical practitioner, makes the student physically incapable of attending school. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt but should advise parents accordingly. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.
N	Absence without a reason being provided at the time when the register is marked. This code should not be left on a student's attendance record indefinitely. Schools should follow up on all unexplained absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for absence. When the reason for the student's absence is established, the register should be amended with the appropriate absence code. If a reason for absence is not provided within 3 days , the N code should be replaced with code O (i.e. absent from school without authorisation)
O	Unauthorized absence if suspected
P	Authorised Absence from School: Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.
S	Study leave: Study leave should be used sparingly and granted to Year 11 students only in preparation for external examinations.
V	Educational visit or trip - This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential Trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

X	<p>Not attending for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic Applications of this code must be associated with parents following official public health advice. That is,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, have symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) • students are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) • students are required by Public Health Authorities to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine <p>N.B.: Non-attendance in this category will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.</p>
W	Work experience participation: Arrangements should be in place for the placement provider to notify the school of any absences by individual students.



Appendix 2

Attendance Policy & Improvement Plan



STRIVE TO BE ON TIME
EVERY  STRIVE
MINUTE
COUNTS

MINUTES LATE	IMPACT ON YOUR ATTENDANCE IN A YEAR
5 MINUTES A DAY =	3.4 days 98.4% attendance
10 MINUTES A DAY =	6.9 days 97.6% attendance
15 MINUTES A DAY =	10.3 days 94.6% attendance
20 MINUTES A DAY =	13.8 days 92.9% attendance
30 MINUTES A DAY =	20.7 days 89.2% attendance

Appendix 3

Ms. Janice Headley-Thorpe
Principal (Acting)
Ms. Deniece Williams
Deputy Principal (Acting)



P.O. Box 1834
Grand Cayman KY1-1110
Cayman Islands
Phone: (345) 947-5454
E-mail: lhs@lhs.edu.ky

Attendance Concern Notice

Student Name:		Date: 17 th Dec 2019
Class	Attendance Data: % attendance	
Summary of Concern: e.g. Attendance below 90% / Lateness		

Dear Parent /Guardian,

The purpose of this notice is to inform you about concerns regarding your child's attendance as summarized above.

The current concern relates to your child's attendance being below 90%. As such, your child is considered to be '**persistently absent**'.

We do recognize that some students present with unique medical needs that are not compatible with the most regular attendance. All medical absences should be explained with a medical note.

Explaining and accounting for all absences is your responsibility as the child's parent / guardian. If you have not explained these absences at the time of receipt of this concern notice, please do so immediately.

Failure to do so will require the school to refer this attendance concern to the Department of Education Services, Attendance Officer.

Please contact the school on 947-5454 or email dwilliams@lhs.edu.ky

Yours sincerely

Ms. Denise Williams
Special Education Needs Coordinator