



September 2023

Dear parents/guardians

**Re: Lighthouse Schools Partnership Attendance Policy**

Unfortunately the recent pandemic has negatively affected school attendance for a variety of unavoidable reasons. The rhythm and culture of school attendance has not yet fully recovered across the country and I am sorry to say that is also the case in our schools. Some of these difficulties are deep-seated and I acknowledge the problems and suffering that mental health challenges present to a minority of our children and young people. Our schools are working hard with families affected to get a team of support around those who need it.

In all other situations we aim to set consistently high standards and expectations across our Trust, recognising that attendance is one of the most fundamental pillars supporting a great education. Our goal is for all students to have 100% attendance and our schools therefore monitor closely any attendance below 96%. I hope that you will see this priority on attendance and experience clear communication of your son/daughter's attendance levels in your contact with the school.

Most of our primary phase pupils will continue their education in a Lighthouse Schools Partnership secondary school. This means that a great many of our families have children in two of our schools. We are using the same Attendance Policy, commissioning the same education welfare service and doing all that we can to provide consistent advice and support to our families. It is our aim that where the circumstances are the same, we would manage attendance issues in the same way in each school.

This is particularly the case when it comes to dealing with difficult issues such as requests for leave of absence (including holidays) in term time. The law on this is now very clear and has been tested in the courts: such absences should only be granted in exceptional circumstances and a family holiday does not constitute such an exception. Our Trust policy is in line with the May 2022 statutory guidance to schools and we have reduced the Headteachers' discretion so that in almost all cases a request for a holiday in term time will have to be refused and if the unauthorised holiday is for 10 or more sessions (i.e. 5 or more full days) it will incur a Penalty Notice. Our Headteachers will use their discretion to consider non-holiday requests for leave where exceptional circumstances exist.

I am very happy to answer any questions that you may have about the Trust's attendance policy and the Headteacher at your child's school (or someone from his or her team) will be very glad to discuss any matters of attendance specific to your child. Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely



Mr G Lewis  
Chief Executive  
Lighthouse Schools Partnership

**Chief Executive: Mr G J Lewis MA**

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