

Launceston College

Part of Athena Learning Trust

Pupil Attendance Policy

Launceston College

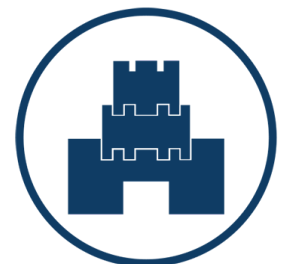
Review

Reviewed: July 2025

Reviewed by: Trust Board

Review period: Annual

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This policy is the responsibility of: Louise Rash

This Attendance Policy applies to Launceston College and all governors and staff of the school must abide by this policy which has been adopted in accordance with and pursuant to the Safeguarding Policy of Launceston College.

It is the responsibility of the local governing body and Principal of the school to ensure that their school and its staff adhere to this policy. In implementing this policy school staff must take account of any advice given to them by the CEO and/or Board of Trustees.

This policy is subject to Launceston College Safeguarding Policy and the Scheme of Delegation approved for the school. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then Launceston College Safeguarding Policy and the Scheme of Delegation and any specific Scheme or alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees takes precedence. If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation of this, the Attendance lead for Athena Learning Trust (see the Athena Learning trust Safeguarding Policy) should be consulted.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Please note: The term 'children missing education' is different from 'children absent from education'. Supporting children who are absent from education helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

Launceston College Attendance Policy

At Launceston College we firmly believe that all students benefit from outstanding school attendance. To this end, we will do all we can to ensure that our students achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. In order for a student's attendance record to be deemed very good, it must be 96% or above:

100%- Outstanding Attendance

97% - Very Good Attendance

96% - Good Attendance

95% - Improvement required

Aims and objectives

We intend to establish systems and practices which will:

- Create an ethos in which excellent attendance is the norm.
- Maintain a safe, secure environment where students feel valued and welcome, thereby positively encouraging attendance.
- Raise student awareness of the importance of punctuality and uninterrupted attendance, and encourage in students a sense of responsibility.
- Celebrate excellent school attendance.
- Support students and families who experience difficulties maintaining good school attendance.

Expectations

We expect that all students will:

- Attend every day that school is open to them
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities

- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day
- Contact the school before 8:30am on the morning of each day of the student's absence by calling the attendance line
- All absences should be followed up by a letter explaining the reason and date of absence or a medical appointment card. Any unexplained absence is treated as an unauthorised absence
- Parents are encouraged to contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

Launceston College has a responsibility to ensure that all teachers:

- Complete registers accurately and punctually during every registration period and lesson
- Assist the attendance officer in following up any unexplained absences upon the student's return to school
- Inform the Head of Year/Safeguarding Team/SLT of concerns
- Be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and to report these concerns as soon as possible to the attendance officer

Responding to Non-Attendance

Student attendance is continually monitored by the attendance officer. When a student does not attend school, the school will respond in the following manner:

- If no telephone call is received from the parent, the Attendance Officer will activate the 'First Day Absence' call. The system will text/email the Priority 1 parent's contact Number.
- If no telephone call is received confirming absence, the Attendance Officer will call all contacts to establish a reason for absence.
- If a student has unexplained absence for three consecutive days with no contact from contacts, a home visit will take place on the third day.
- For any students with unexplained absence that are children in need or under a child protection plan, the Attendance Officer will report to DSL immediately for advice.
- In the event of no response being received for the absence, a letter will be sent home. If no response is received within 10 days of the date of the letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

- Periods of absence from school of 4 days or more will require medical evidence to be provided. This can be in the form of an appointment card, appointment letter, Doctor's letter, photograph of prescription or medication prescribed, screenshot of appointment text message, appointment email.

Home visit procedure

Home visits take place under the specific circumstances listed below, with the aim of supporting students to return to college as soon as possible. Parents/carers are called first to discuss the home visit. If we are unable to reach parents/carers, a message will be left, and a home visit may still take place if we are able to do so.

Circumstances for a home visit include, but are not limited to:

- Absence for three days with no reason given
- Absence where we believe a home visit may support a student to return to school
- Safeguarding concerns raised

Pupils who are dual-registered

Where pupils are registered at more than solely the Launceston College setting, the school works closely with these providers to monitor pupil attendance and to follow-up on any non-attendance promptly. This includes implementing appropriate systems for non-attendance and persistent non-attendance.

There are 3 stages of dealing with absenteeism at Launceston College

Stage 1

A letter will be sent to the parent of any student whose attendance falls below 95%, this will be accompanied by a phone call by a member of staff to offer support to improve attendance. This is monitored for a period of 2 weeks.

Stage 2

If there is no marked improvement, parents will receive a second letter and be invited in for a meeting with a member of staff. An attendance support plan will be agreed on to address any issues preventing a child from attending school. If no improvement is seen, at *10 sessions* of unauthorised absence or more in 10 weeks a penalty notice may be issued and or referred to the local authority for further actions.

Stage 3

If no improvement is seen, or at *10 sessions* of unauthorised absence or more in 10 weeks, an attendance action plan meeting will take place with a relevant member of staff. If parents choose not to attend the first meeting it will take place in their absence, however an option to re-arrange will be given if requested. A notice to improve may be issued at this point. If no improvement is seen in attendance, the case is referred to our internal attendance team to begin legal proceedings, including service a penalty notice and referral to court.

Continued failure to contact the school to report a child's absence may result in a referral to the school's Safeguarding Team, MASH/MARU Team or the police for a welfare check.

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the school may result in further action, by either an issue of a Penalty Notice, an application for an Education Supervision Order or court prosecution.

At any stage of absenteeism, we involve our attendance/pastoral team and/or education welfare service. This involvement will be most supportive and pronounced for children at risk of persistent absence or currently persistently absent (i.e. below 90% attendance).

Please note that at any point in the process a penalty notice may be issued in accordance with guidance of 10 unauthorised absences in a 10 week period.

Medical evidence may also be requested on a case by case basis at any point in the process so that school can best support the child.

Lateness

The school day begins at 0845 with morning greeting. Morning registration takes place at 0850.

Morning registration – 0850 to 0920. Registers are closed at 0920.

- If a student arrives late to registration, after 0920, they must 'sign in' at reception
- If a student arrives late to registration they need to attend Triage. Where appropriate, reasons for lateness are investigated and responded to in the appropriate manner.
- Lateness after registration closes is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) and parents will be notified of this absence via MCAS app.

Absences that the school is unable to authorise include:

- Holidays during term time
- Arrival after the registers close at 0920 without prior notification
- Shopping trips, even if this is for school uniform
- Birthday celebrations
- Looking after a relative/pets
- Tiredness due to extra-curricular activities
- All unexplained absences

Use of 'O' and 'U' Codes for Internal Truancy and Unauthorised Absence

To support early intervention and improve attendance outcomes, the school may apply the following attendance codes under specific circumstances, in line with statutory guidance and safeguarding responsibilities:

- **Code 'O' – Unauthorised Absence:** Used when a pupil's whereabouts are unknown, and no valid reason has been provided. This includes failure to attend without explanation. In such cases, all safeguarding procedures must be followed to ensure the pupil's safety and welfare.
- **Code 'U' – Late After Register Closes:** Applied when a pupil arrives after the register has closed or is on site but fails to attend scheduled lessons without permission (internal truancy).

These codes may only be used when the following steps have been taken:

- A formal letter has been sent to the parent/carer outlining the concerns.
- A meeting has been offered, during which a support plan or attendance contract is agreed with the parent/carer and, where appropriate, the pupil.

Once a pupil accrues **10 sessions of unauthorised absence (O or U coded) within a 10-week period**, the case may be referred for a **Penalty Notice**.

Medical Appointments

Parents are encouraged to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours but where this is not possible the school should be notified in advance by emailing or sending a letter to the school, addressed to the Attendance Officer. Where it is not possible to arrange appointments outside of school hours, students are encouraged to attend school either side of their appointment.

Religious Holidays

We will authorise absence for major religious holidays; duration at the discretion of the school. It is the responsibility of the parent to inform us in advance of their intention to keep their child at home. If parents do not inform the school any days missed will be recorded as unauthorised absences. Requests for extended absence for religious observances should be made in writing to the Principal.

Traveller pupils

Traveller pupils 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.

Holidays

The school holiday dates are published in advance on the school website and it is essential that parents take their family holidays during the school holidays. It is the school's policy not to authorise absence during term time for holidays and any absence of this nature will be recorded as unauthorised. Should parents choose to remove their child from school for a holiday during term, they may be considered for a Penalty Notice.

We recognise that there may be occasions where a parent feels there are extenuating reasons for requesting leave during term time. In such circumstances we advise parents to write to the Principal outlining the reason for the request and the dates the student will be absent from school. Parents will be asked to complete an exceptional leave of absence form. The Principal will inform parents of their decision in writing.

Requests for long periods of absence will not be authorised and a meeting with the Principal and relevant members of staff may be required. Prolonged unauthorised absences may put your child's place at Launceston College at risk.

If parents take their children on holiday during term time without authorisation the School will apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1966 and the Education and Inspection Act 2006. The fine from September 2024 will be £80 per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, increasing to £160 if paid after this date, but within 28 days. Failure to pay can result in a referral to court. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will

automatically rise to £160 per parent with no option to pay the lower rate of £80. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them. This could include prosecution, including a £2500 fine.

Please note that a Penalty Notice is issued to each parent in respect of each child not attending school. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility or who has care of the child.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

The Legal Framework

Regular school attendance of children of compulsory school age is the responsibility of the parent and is a legal requirement in accordance with Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Parents are committing an offence if they fail to comply with this legislation and legal action can be instigated.

Penalty Notices are not the only means of disposal for these offences. Depending on the circumstances of each case, the Local Authority may alternatively decide to issue a caution, or to prosecute the offence in a magistrates' court, or to take no further action.

Penalty Notices for offences under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 must be issued by an authorised officer in accordance with Section 444A of the Education Act 1996. The practice in Cornwall is for all Penalty Notices to be issued by the Local Authority.

Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority under any of the following circumstances:

- An excluded pupil found in a public place
- Unauthorised holiday during term time
- Persistent lateness after registers have closed