

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

Introduction

At Little Heath School we firmly believe good attendance and arriving on time are crucial factors in pupils achieving their full potential, staying safe and getting the most out of the whole school experience. There is a clear link between high attendance and high academic achievement and thus, absence, for any reason, has a negative effect on learning. Attendance is the responsibility of every stakeholder at Little Heath School: it is in everyone's interests, and it is everyone's business. Positive and consistent communication between home and school is central to improving and maintaining high levels of attendance.

Attendance

We expect all our pupils to attend school regularly and on time. We set all pupils a minimum target level of 96%. Pupils and parents should routinely monitor their attendance and punctuality on Satchel One. The school regularly reviews each pupil's attendance and West Berkshire Education Welfare Service may get involved where attendance falls below 90%. An attendance rate of 90% is equivalent to missing half a day of school per week or one day per fortnight. ⁱ

The diagram below illustrates clearly the impact attendance can have on academic achievement.



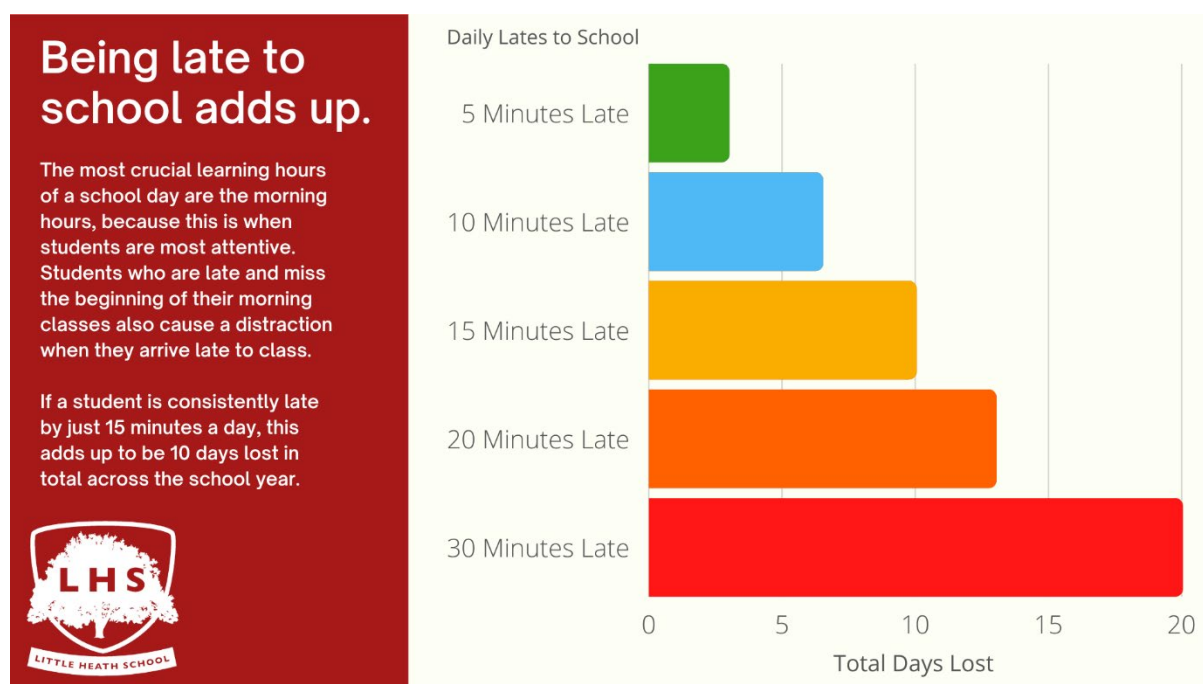
At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9-4 in English and mathematics had an overall rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those gaining grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%). ⁱⁱ Clearly any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Good attendance is also essential for pupils to get the most out of their school

experience, wellbeing and wider life chances. The aim should be 100% attendance all the time, although we understand this is not always possible. Ensuring regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility, but helping to maintain a regular pattern of attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff. We are keen to work with parents, pupils and the Local Authority to ensure attendance is as good as it can be to improve the chances of the young people in our care. Pupils who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance and punctuality also show potential employers and colleges that a young person is reliable.

Punctuality

Punctuality is a very important part of time management and self-discipline. It is the responsibility of pupils and parents to ensure they arrive at school on time. The vast majority of pupils arrive promptly and move between lessons with pace and purpose. From September 2024, all pupils are expected to be on the school site and moving to their tutor room by 8.47am. A bell will sound, and the school gates will close then. Anyone arriving after this time will be classified as late for school. When pupils use public transport to get to school, they must ensure they catch a bus that allows them to be on the school site before the 8.47am bell. Those travelling by car need to allow plenty of time for adverse traffic.

If a pupil arrives late to school regularly their learning begins to suffer. Each pupil is responsible for ensuring they are in the correct classroom at the right time. The bar chart below illustrates how being late to school every day over a school year soon adds up and this will understandably have a negative impact on learning. At Little Heath we believe that arriving to lessons punctually helps create a positive environment for learning and shows that our pupils are 'Ready to Learn.'



Morning registration will commence at 8.50am and pupils should be sat in their tutor room ready for morning registration by this time. Pupils have their second registration mark of the day at 2.05pm and again should be in their form rooms by this time. Pupils can only enter school through the Sixth Form or Main Gate, and it is their responsibility to ensure they arrive in plenty of time to enter the school grounds by 8.47am at the latest and be in their tutor rooms by 8.50am.

The Sixth Form gates are closed at 8.47am and any pupils arriving after this time will have to enter the school through the Main Gate, into reception and sign in using our Inventory electronic sign in system, which records the number of minutes late. All pupils who arrive after 8.47am will be issued with a 25-minute lunchtime detention for that day. Failure to attend the lunchtime detention will result in a 60-minute Same Day Sanction (SDS) that evening. Parents will be notified via email.

Pupils who arrive after the registers have closed at 9.15am will again have to sign in at Main Reception and be issued with an automatic after school Same Day Sanction of 60-minutes. They will be marked on the register as 'U'. This counts as unauthorised absence for the morning session as registers have closed. This will therefore impact on a pupil's overall attendance. Parents and carers should inform the school as soon as possible if there are exceptional circumstances that caused their child's late arrival. Where pupils have already had one late in a term the detention will stand regardless of parental contact.

This academic year, we are continuing to address lateness in the morning and after break times. If a pupil is late to morning tutor time, Lesson 1, Period 3 or PM Tutor Time, then they will be issued with a 20-minute lunchtime detention the next day. On the rare occasions when there is a valid reason to be late (e.g. in a meeting with a teacher), then pupils must have a note to explain this. We will sound a warning bell at 8.47am, 11.17am and 2.02pm to let pupils know they need to move to Lesson 3 and pm tutor time.

Pupils are expected to arrive to lessons on time. If pupils are late to three or more lessons or tutor times in a week, we will give pupils a warning and notify parents. If this continues the pupil will be issued with a Same Day Sanction for 60-minutes after school. Further lateness results in a SLT detention and then if this persists Internal Exclusion for the day. Where there is a persistent problem with getting to lessons or tutor time punctually, we will discuss with parents and further consequences will be put in place.

Daily Routines at Little Heath School

School is open from 8am and pupils are welcome to use the library for quiet study, go to the canteen to buy breakfast, make use of the basketball courts or outdoor seating areas. Pupils are welcomed into school in the morning at the Main entrance and Sixth Form gate from 8.30am by members of our Senior Leadership Team. All pupils must be on school site by 8.47am and sat in morning tutor time by 8.50am.

How to report absence:

- Contact school preferably before 8.30am – it is a parental duty for you to do this and helps with safeguarding.
- Parents should report absences on the Arbor app. We will then decide to 'accept' or 'reject' the absence and code it with the correct absence code.
- Where we require evidence for the absence, e.g. a medical appointment or where attendance is below 90% this should be emailed to attendance@littleheath.org.uk
- Ensure the email contains your child's name and year group / tutor group.
- You must clearly state the reason for absence –it is not enough to say 'unwell' or 'not coming in.' You must give us specific details of the illness.

- Please remember it is up to the school to authorise absence, not the parent. It is easier for us to do this if you provide evidence for the absence e.g. photo of prescribed medication, screen shot of hospital appointment etc.
- If no communication has been received, we will call parents / carers, as appropriate.
- In the case of pupils who we have identified as vulnerable, a priority phone call, directly to the pupil or parent, will be made by 10.30am.
- If you would like to speak to the Attendance Officer to further discuss absence it is better to do this after 10am, but please ensure you have already emailed in. Ring 01189 427337 and select the absence line.
- Non-urgent medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours and usually only a half-day will be authorised i.e. pupils are expected to attend school and leave for afternoon appointments and sign in late for morning appointments.

If there is an unexplained absence, parents / carers will receive an email by 10.00am asking them to inform us of a reason for their absence by 11am. If no communication has been received, we will call parents / carers, as appropriate.

Where pupils and families require support to improve attendance, we can create a personalised plan, including support from internal and external agencies. Ultimately, our goal is for all pupils to regularly attend school to maximise their chances of fulfilling and exceeding their potential.

Types of Absence

There are two formal registration windows each day in every school– morning and afternoon registration. ⁱⁱⁱ Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by schools as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why it is important we have clear information about the reason for absence as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Where attendance drops below 95% we may request medical evidence for the absence and this will be essential where attendance is below 90%. ^{iv}

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like:

- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Medical / dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time i.e. consultant or clinical ones, not routine dental check-up
- ✓ Emergencies or other unavoidable causes
- ✓ Religious observance (although this is for a limited number of days)

Please be aware that although all the above are authorised, they still do affect a pupil's overall attendance percentage for an academic year.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions or legal proceedings. This includes:

- ✓ Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- ✓ Truancy (including leaving the school site during the day)
- ✓ Absences which have never been properly explained
- ✓ Children who arrive too late at school to get a mark e.g. due to sleeping in
- ✓ Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- ✓ Day trips and holidays in term time*
- ✓ Minor illnesses e.g. a tummy ache or a slight headache
- ✓ Excessive illness without medical evidence
- ✓ Days off to rest after school trips or other private trips

*Absence request forms can be found at [Little Heath School - Attendance](#) Please note due to new government statutory guidance holidays during term time will not be authorised and are never considered exceptional circumstances. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday during term time to be an exceptional circumstance, regardless of the reason.

We understand that some children do not like attending school, so please work with us rather than allowing your child to stay off unnecessarily. Please contact your child's form tutor and / or Head of Year if you or your child have any concerns. We really want to work with you to ensure the best achievements for all the pupils in our care.

Appointments during the school day

Dental and medical appointments should, wherever possible, be made out of school hours. If your child has an unavoidable appointment, we request that an email copy of their appointment letter is sent in advance to our Attendance Office to authorise as a medical appointment. When the time arrives for the pupil to leave school, they should report to Main Reception to sign out and sign in when they return to school. Please be aware, that although these may be an authorised medical appointment, if your child misses a morning or afternoon registration, the appointment will affect a pupil's overall attendance percentage. In most circumstances, pupils should not be absent from school for the whole day for medical appointments.

Important Contacts

Please note all calls are via the school office – 0118 9427337

Person	Role	Contact Detail
Attendance Officer	Attendance Officer	Please notify of any absence by 8.30am using the Arbor App or email attendance@littleheath.org.uk when evidence is required e.g. non-routine medical appointment, attendance below 90% etc
Form Tutor	Twice daily check-in with pupils and completes statutory am and pm registration	A list of all the Form Tutors and their email addresses are on the website here: Little Heath School - Key Stage Contacts & Tutors
Miss N Guppy	KS3 Administrator	nguppy@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Roanne Harper	KS3 Progress Leader	rharper@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs J Perry	KS4 Administrator	jperry@littleheath.org.uk
Miss Ellie Glasgow	KS4 Progress Leader	eglasgow@littleheath.org.uk
Miss K Nicholson	KS4 Progress Leader	knicholson@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs M Wraight	Pupil Premium and Disadvantaged Pupils Progress Leader	mwraight@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Rachel Jessop	Head of Year 7	rjessop@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Fae Apsey	Head of Year 8	fapsey@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Amy Parsons	Head of Year 9	aparsons@littleheath.org.uk
Mr Chris Davies	Head of Year 10	cdavies@littleheath.org.uk
Ms Jess Kennedy	Head of Year 11	jkennedy@littleheath.org.uk
Mr Toby Jessop	Head of Year 12 & 13	tjessop@littleheath.org.uk
Ms Charlotte Jones	SEND Co	cjones@littleheath.org.uk

Ms Kayley Button	Attendance Champion and DH Student Support	kbutton@littleheath.org.uk
Mr Steve Rayner	Assistant Head i.c. KS3	srayner@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Ros Rayner	Assistant Head i.c. KS4	rrayner@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Rebecca Whitford	Assistant Head i.c. Teaching and Learning	rwhitford@littleheath.org.uk
Mr Josh Coulson	Deputy Head i.c. Raising Standards	jcoulson@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Sam Chaventré	Deputy Head i.c. Curriculum	schaventre@littleheath.org.uk
Mr David Ramsden	Headteacher	dramsdn@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Heather Robertson	Local Authority Attendance Officer	heather.robertson2@westberks.gov.uk

Promoting and Incentivising Good Attendance

We will seek to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality with pupils through tutorial work and assemblies focusing on the benefits of good attendance. Posters outlining the importance of good attendance and punctuality will be displayed in each tutor base. Positive messages regarding the importance of good attendance and promoting inter-house attendance competitions will be displayed on the digital signage.

Reward schemes for good attendance and punctuality at Little Heath include:

1. Weekly house points for 100% attendance and excellent punctuality.
2. Praise letters to recognise good or improved attendance.
3. Half-termly prize draw for pupils with 100% attendance.
4. Inter-form competitions to encourage competition in attendance.
5. Letters home to praise improved punctuality and attendance.

In addition, the importance of good attendance is promoted to parents at parent information evenings, in school reports and through the school newsletter.

Procedures for return to school following a long period of absence

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends regularly. Parents/carers are expected to arrange for their children to come to school every day whenever possible even if there are on-going medical or other difficulties. If a child is recovering from an illness or injury and not strong enough to stand the full rigours of a school day, it may be possible to make special arrangements. However, the full quarantine for infectious diseases should be observed. Parents/carers should contact the Tutor or Head of Year to discuss this.

Parents/carers should contact the Tutor or Head of Year if a long absence is known about in advance (e.g. after some operations). For extended periods of absence due to hospitalisation or recovery from serious illness or injury, the school will liaise with the Local Authority to organise medical tuition if this is deemed necessary. Alternatively, it may be appropriate for pupils to work in our Inclusion department before returning to their usual lessons.

Little Heath School Strategy for using data to improve attendance

The School Attendance Officer will monitor attendance and punctuality daily through the school's management information system (Arbor). Where a pupil's attendance has been identified as a

concern the parent / carer will be phoned on the first day of absence and we will actively seek to help the child return to school as soon as possible.

Form tutors will use Arbor to check daily attendance and punctuality and each week house points will be given to those with 100% attendance and punctuality. They will discuss concerns during tutor times and praise those with consistently high attendance or excellent punctuality and discuss concerns with those who are not meeting expectations. Tutors will discuss attendance and punctuality concerns with their HOYs at the fortnightly tutor briefings.

Each week a report will be sent to the Achievement Leaders, HOYs and SLT Link for pupils whose attendance is 91-95% and for those that is 90% or below. When a pupil's attendance falls below 93% a letter will be sent to parents to make them aware. This will prompt a discussion with their tutor to ensure the pupil is aware of the implications to their learning and to ensure there are no barriers to learning. The pastoral team will contact parents to consider how we can work together to support the pupil attending school regularly moving forward if attendance continues to drop.

When attendance drops to 90% or below, a pupil's attendance will be monitored daily by the Attendance Officer and the HOY, and they may be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Officer for closer monitoring. Parents / carers will be informed of their child's attendance and of the school's concern about its potential negative effects on the child's education. Parents / carers may be invited into school to formulate an individual action plan and set targets for improved attendance. Where possible, we aim to avoid referrals to the Local Authority Attendance Officer and would prefer to work directly with our families to offer support and ensure attendance improves.

Each half term an attendance report is produced by the Attendance Officer that provides attendance data for Years 7 to 11. This includes:

- percentage attendance by year group and gender
- identification of pupils with 100% attendance
- identification of pupils with less than 90% attendance
- identification of pupils with 90-95% attendance
- identification of pupils who are late to school on a regular basis

Little Heath's School Strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 90%. Severe absence is that which falls below 50%. At this stage, the school will require evidence that medical advice has been sought before authorising any absence due to illness. These types of absence are potentially a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work missed during days off school is never made up, leaving these persistently absent pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Where a pupil is identified as having persistent or severe absence we would prefer to work with the pupils and parents / carers than prosecute. A meeting will be called to discuss barriers to attending, create an individual plan and to set targets for improvement. The Pastoral Team will liaise with the Well Being Team and if necessary, we will work with the LA to help formalise support and access further support from outside agencies.

Fixed Penalty Notices and other sanctions

Little Heath School and the Education Attendance Officer will seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working together to support the family with improving a child's attendance. Where this is not

successful, or where parents do not engage with support, then more formal procedures may be followed.

Attendance contracts:

- A formal written agreement between a parent and the school and/or Local Authority to address irregular attendance at school.
- Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.
- This is a supportive tool, which aims to provide an alternative to prosecution.
- The aim is for the parent(s), pupil, the school and Local Authority to work in partnership towards the common goal of improved attendance.

If an attendance contract is not effective at improving attendance, or is deemed not appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to progress legal interventions:

- **Penalty Notices** (See poster on right for clarity). The threshold is 10 sessions (tutor times) which is equivalent to 5 days of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks or for term time holidays.
- **Education Supervision Orders**
- **Attendance prosecutions**
- **Parenting Orders**

We would like to stress that we would prefer to work with our children and families to improve school attendance and encourage our pupils back into school without having to resort to the legal powers outlined above. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you are struggling to get your son / daughter to school and hopefully if we all work together, we can ensure each pupil is in school receiving the education they deserve.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS

Penalty Notice Fines for absence from school are changing

From 19th August 2024 Penalty Notice fines increase to £160 for each parent, for each child.

You can be fined if your child has a total of 5 days of unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks, for things like:

- being late after the register has closed
- truancy
- taking a holiday without permission from the school
- or if a headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason for missing school

Over a rolling 3-year period the sanctions are:

- 1st offence – £160 reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days
- 2nd offence – £160
- 3rd offence – Court hearing and up to £2,500 fine, or up to 3 months in prison and a criminal record

For more information please contact:
EWSS@westberks.gov.uk

Further Reading

The Department for Education's attendance guidance for schools can be located here: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101444/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

For further information and specific details of legal interventions please read: [School attendance and absence: Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101444/School_attendance_and_absence_Legal_action_to_enforce_school_attendance.pdf)

Appendices and related documents

See Appendix 1 for the Sixth Form Attendance Policy for specific details relating to Sixth Form attendance and punctuality. This can also be viewed on the website here: [Little Heath School - Sixth Form Attendance](#)

ⁱ Please note we always have 2 registers in school per day, even on the last day of term. A half day absence is missing 1 registration.

ⁱⁱ [The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4, Academic year 2018/19 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

ⁱⁱⁱ Including at the end of term.

^{iv} Medical evidence for physical and mental illness can include screen shots of doctor's appointments or medication issued.

APPENDIX 1: LITTLE HEATH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR SIXTH FORM

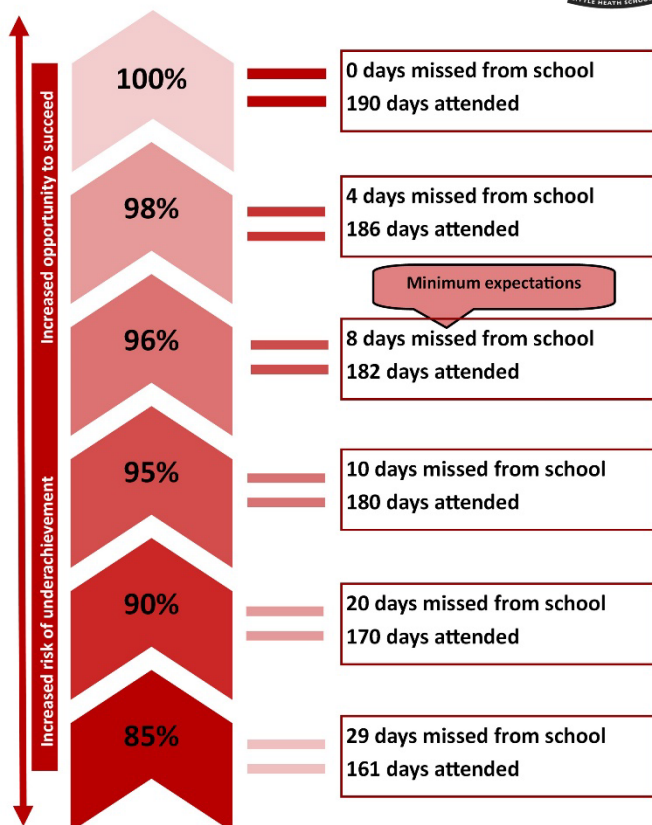
Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

Introduction

In Sixth Form, at Little Heath School, we firmly believe good attendance and arriving on time are crucial factors in students achieving their full potential, staying safe and getting the most out of the whole school experience. There is a clear link between high attendance and high academic achievement, therefore absence, for any reason, has a negative effect on learning. Attendance is the responsibility of every stakeholder at Little Heath School: it is in everyone's interests and it is everyone's business. In Sixth Form, we believe that continued positive and consistent communication between home and school is central to improving and maintaining high levels of attendance. When joining Sixth Form at Little Heath School students receive a copy of our home school agreement which they are expected to read and sign to show their agreement when joining our Sixth Form.

Attendance

The impact of attendance...



We expect Sixth Formers at Little Heath School to attend school regularly, on time and be prepared for a day of learning. We set all Sixth Form students a minimum target level of 96%, in line with other students across the school. We make attendance and punctuality a priority for students, parents, teachers and governors and have developed a systematic approach with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks relating to attendance.

Students with consistently high and improved attendance receive praise and rewards in line with our current praise strategy. Sixth Form attendance is monitored and reviewed by the Sixth Form; students who are identified as needing support to improve their attendance are placed on our 'Steps to Success' scheme, as detailed in appendix 1.

An attendance rate of 90% is the equivalent to missing half a day of school per week or one full day per fortnight.

Research proves there is a strong negative link between absence and attainment.

The diagram illustrates the impact that missing school during the academic year can have on academic achievement.

In line with the Department for Education, Little Heath School operates the following definitions in relation to students' attendance:

- Persistent absence: A student is considered to be persistently absent if their attendance is 90%. This includes authorised absence, unauthorised absence or a combination of both. An attendance rate of 90% is equivalent to missing half a day of school per week or one day per fortnight.
- Severe absence: A student is considered to be severely absent if their attendance reaches 50%. This includes authorised absence, unauthorised absence or a combination of both.

As a Sixth Form, we understand and offer empathy and support to students who are working to improve and sustain excellent levels of attendance, but we do not accept continued, low, unexpected or unexplained absences.

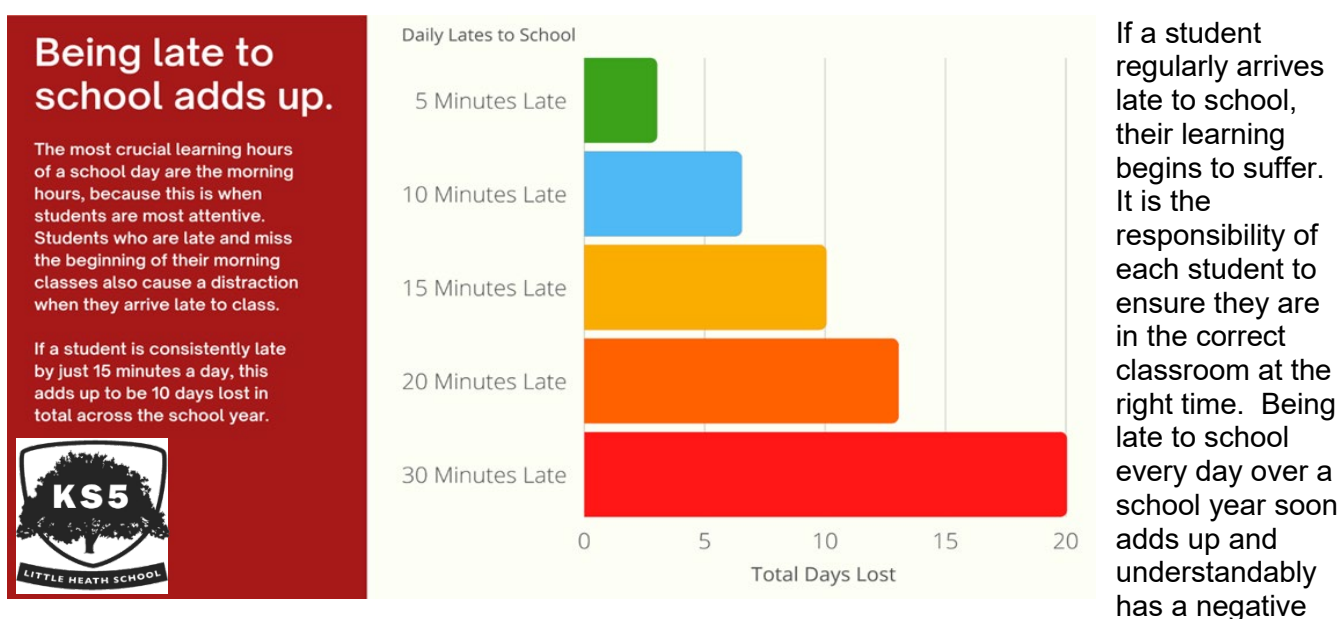
Research clearly identifies a negative link between attendance and attainment at all key stages within schools. We strive for all our students to fulfil their potential; ensuring regular attendance is the first step.

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility, but helping to maintain a regular pattern of attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, students and all members of school staff (Appendix 1). We are keen to work with parents, students and the local authority to ensure attendance is as good as it can be to improve the chances of the young people in our care. Students who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance and punctuality also show universities and potential employers that a young person is reliable.

Punctuality

The information below applies to all students in Sixth Form, unless Home study has been awarded.

Punctuality is a very important part of time management and self-discipline. It is the responsibility of students and parents to ensure they arrive to school on time. Where students use public transport to get to school, they must ensure they catch a bus that allows them to be in registration for 8.50am.



At Little Heath we believe that arriving to lessons punctually helps create a positive environment for learning and shows that our students are 'Ready to Learn.'

The school day begins promptly at 8.50am and students should be sat in their tutor room ready for morning registration. Students have their second registration mark of the day at 2.05pm and again should be in their form rooms by this time. The vast majority of students arrive promptly and move between lessons with pace and purpose. Students can only enter school through the Sixth Form or Main Gate; it is their responsibility to ensure they arrive in plenty of time to enter the school grounds and be in their tutor rooms by 8.50am and 2.05pm.

The Sixth Form vehicle gate closes at 8.15am and the pedestrian gate remains open until 8.50am. Any Sixth Form students arriving late after 8.55am must enter through the Sixth Form pedestrian gate where their name will be recorded by a member of the Sixth Form team and their mobile phone will be confiscated for the day. The students must then tap in to confirm they have arrived on site, and make their way to form or lessons.

Students who arrive after the registers have closed at 9.15am, again tap in at Sixth Form. They must hand in their phone upon arrival they will be marked on the register as 'O'. This counts as unauthorised absence for the morning session as registers have closed. This will therefore impact on a student's overall attendance. Parents and carers should inform the school as soon as possible if there are exceptional circumstances that caused their child's late arrival. All phones handed in are logged and stored in a secure cabinet for collection by the student by the end of the day.

Equally students are expected to arrive to lessons on time. If students are late to lessons, departments address lateness with an appropriate sanction. Further lateness results in escalated sanctions. Where there is a persistent problem with getting to lessons or morning and afternoon tutor time punctually, we will discuss with parents and further consequences will be put in place.

Daily Routines in Sixth Form at Little Heath School

The Sixth Form Centre is open from 8.00am in the morning and students are welcome to use the library, café and common room before morning registration. Breakfast can be purchased from 8.40am in the café.

Students are welcomed into school in the morning at the Main and Sixth Form gate from 8.30am by members of our Senior Leadership Team. Sixth Form students should arrive into school by 8.47am. Morning registration begins at 8.50am and finishes at 9.00am. Unless in receipt of home study, students are expected to register each morning with their tutors during this time.

Students and parents have a responsibility to update us of any absences (please see below for details about types of absence). We ask that a phone call is made to 01189 427337 or an email is sent to ks5absence@littleheath.org.uk by 8.15am which includes the student's name, tutor group and reason for absence. This enables us to update our register, maintain accurate records and crucially, safeguard our students. Please be aware it is not enough to simply state 'illness' or 'poorly', we require further information about the specifics of the illness for our records.

If there is an unexplained absence, we operate a same day contact system in Sixth Form. If students are marked absent or have not tapped in, in the morning, the Sixth Form team will contact the student in the first instance. A message is also sent to parents/carers to inform them their child has not registered or tapped-in to record their presence on site. If the communication is unsuccessful, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, until a valid reason is provided. In the case of students who we have identified as vulnerable, a priority phone call, directly to the student and parent, is made. If unsuccessful, a follow up call will be attempted later.

Where students and families require support to improve attendance, we are able to create a personalised plan including support from internal and external agencies. Ultimately, our goal is for all students to regularly attend school to maximise their chances of fulfilling and exceeding their potential.

Types of absences

There are two formal registration windows each day in every school – morning and afternoon registration. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by schools as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why it is important we have clear information about the reason for absence as soon as possible on the first day of absence. In addition, where attendance drops below 95% we may request medical evidence for the absence.

Authorised absences, set by the Department for Education, are mornings or afternoons away from school for a genuine reason like:

- ✓ The student is too ill to leave the house;
- ✓ The student has a hospital appointment;
- ✓ The student has an emergency dental appointment;

- ✓ A day of religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents/carers belongs;
- ✓ The student is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause;
- ✓ There is a close family bereavement;
- ✓ University / apprenticeship / employer open days;
- ✓ Interviews for university, apprenticeships or employment that will begin after the end of their time in Sixth Form. Students will not be allowed to miss lessons to attend interviews, shifts and inductions for part time work;
- ✓ Work experience;
- ✓ Driving test. ***Students will not be allowed to miss lessons to attend driving lessons.***

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

- Parents / carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Children who arrive too late at school to get a mark e.g. due to sleeping in; minding the house; looking after other children or pets; shopping, or celebrating birthdays;
- Holidays in term time (Absence request forms can be found at: [Little Heath School - Attendance](#) *)
- Minor illnesses e.g. a tummy ache or a slight headache;
- Excessive illness without medical evidence;
- Part time work;
- Truancy (including leaving the school site during the day) – the consequence of truancy is a Same Day Sanction of 60mins after school.

If a student is absent from school for longer than 5 consecutive days due to illness, students/parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence to support the student's absence.

*Please note the DfE issued new guidance for schools in May 2022. They state that head teachers should, *"only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances - it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday."*

Signing In and Out

It is a legal requirement that we know who is in the school building at all times. Students must make sure they 'tap in' with their identity card each time they arrive or leave the school throughout the school day. If students are repeatedly not tapping in or out, it will be viewed as a disciplinary matter. They will receive sanctions in line with the school behaviour policy.

Students at Little Heath Sixth Form are expected to be in school all day from 8.47am – 3.25pm, unless home study has been granted (parents/carers are informed if their child has been granted home study). One of the privileges of our Sixth Form Students is students being allowed to leave school at lunch time. They must tap their identity card to sign out and back in again and ensure they return promptly at 2.05pm for afternoon registration. If students regularly return late from break or lunchtime, they will lose this privilege.

Requests for short-term absence:

Dental and medical appointments should, wherever possible, be made outside of school hours. If a student needs to request a short-term absence, for example:

- They have an unavoidable appointment (medical, driving test, music exam);
- or
- They would like to attend a university open day.

They should complete a 'Signing Out Form' from Sixth Form reception and hand it to the Sixth Form Study Manager at least 24 hours in advance of the date of absence. Students may be asked to provide evidence of the appointment.

When the time arrives for the student to leave school, they should tap out at Sixth Form or Main Reception and then tap back in again when they return. Please be aware, that although these may be an authorised medical appointment, if your son or daughter misses a morning or afternoon registration, the appointment will affect a student's overall attendance percentage.

Important Contacts in the Sixth Form

Please note all calls are via the school office – 0118 9427337

Person	Role	Contact Detail
Attendance Officer	Attendance Officer	0118 9427337 / attendance@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Dawn Wombwell	KS5 Study Manager	0118 9427337 ks5studymanager@littleheath.org.uk
Sixth Form Tutor	Twice daily check-in with students and completes statutory am and pm registration	Please contact the KS administrators if you are unsure of how to contact your child's tutor.
Mrs Helen Hickman	KS5 Progress Leader	ks5progressleader@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Carolina Taplin	KS5 Administrator	sixthform@littleheath.org.uk
Miss Eloise Gardner	KS5 Student Services	ks5studentservices@littleheath.org.uk
Mr Toby Jessop	Head of Sixth Form	tjessop@littleheath.org.uk
Mrs Samantha Chaventré	Deputy Head i.c. Curriculum	schaventre@littleheath.org.uk
Miss Kayley Button	Attendance Champion and DH Student Support	kbutton@littleheath.org.uk
Mr David Ramsden	Headteacher	dramsdn@littleheath.org.uk

Please remember all absence should be report on first day of absence before 8.30am.

Promoting and Incentivising Good Attendance

We encourage excellent attendance and punctuality with students through tutorial work and assemblies focusing on the benefits of good attendance. Posters outlining the importance of good attendance and punctuality are displayed in each tutor base. Positive messages regarding the importance of good attendance and promoting inter-house attendance competitions are displayed on the digital signage. Assemblies that celebrate success in relation to attendance and punctuality are held regularly each half term.

Reward schemes for good attendance and punctuality at Little Heath include:

1. Weekly house points for 100% attendance and excellent punctuality.
2. Praise letters to recognise good or improved attendance.
3. Half-termly prize draw for students with 100% attendance.
4. Inter-form competitions to encourage competition in attendance.
5. Inter-form competitions to celebrate excellent punctuality.
6. Letters home to praise improved punctuality and attendance.
7. Home Study – a hybrid approach to Sixth Form study that is awarded to students who apply, who have met their attendance and study targets.

In addition, the importance of good attendance is promoted to parents at parent information evenings; in school reports; through the school newsletter and half termly attendance updates.

Home Study

To help prepare students for a hybrid work pattern that many will experience when they leave Sixth Form, we have developed Home Study as a way to reward students who have secured good attendance, punctuality and study habits. Parents/carers are informed if their child has been granted home study.

Year 12 students can apply for Home Study to begin at the beginning of Term 3, after an initial transition period. If they meet certain criteria relating to attendance, punctuality, engagement with learning and recently recorded grades, they can submit a request to study at home for six periods across a fortnight. If successful, they must tap in and out whenever they enter or leave the school site. After receiving Home Study, if there are any changes to students' attendance, punctuality, engagement with learning or most recent grades, it may be withdrawn. If students are not successful in their application for Home Study, they receive feedback on their application and have a further chance to reapply each half term. Students in receipt of Home Study are still expected to uphold the same standards and targets detailed in this document, when expected in school.

Year 13 students can apply for Home Study during Term 1. If they meet certain criteria relating to attendance, punctuality, engagement with learning and recently recorded grades, they can submit a request to study at home for eight periods across a fortnight. If successful, they must tap in and out whenever they enter or leave the school site. After receiving Home Study, if there are any changes to students' attendance, punctuality, engagement with learning or most recent grades, it may be withdrawn. If students are not successful in their application for Home Study, they receive feedback on their application and have a further chance to reapply each half term. Students in receipt of Home Study are still expected to uphold the same standards and targets detailed in this document, when expected in school.

Procedures for return to school following a long period of absence

Parents/carers are expected to arrange for their children to come to school every day whenever possible, even if there are on-going medical or other difficulties. If a child is recovering from an illness or injury and not strong enough to stand the full rigours of a school day, it may be possible to make special arrangements. However, the full quarantine for infectious diseases should be observed. Parents/carers should contact their child's tutor, Key Stage 5 Study Manager or Head of Year to discuss this.

Parents/carers should also contact their child's tutor, Key Stage 5 Study Manager or Head of Year if a long absence is known about in advance (e.g. after some operations). A personalised plan will be created in each circumstance to support the student through their absence and in their return to full time schooling.

Little Heath School Strategy for using data to improve attendance

The Key Stage 5 Study Manager will monitor attendance and punctuality daily through the school's management information system (Arbor). Where a student's attendance is unexpected, the parent / carer will be contacted on the first day of absence and we actively seek to help the child return to school as soon as possible.

Key Stage 5 tutors use Arbor to check daily attendance and punctuality. Tutors discuss concerns during 1-1 meetings with their tutees during tutor times. During 1-1 meetings, tutors praise students with consistently high attendance or excellent punctuality and discuss concerns with those who are not meeting expectations. Tutors discuss attendance and punctuality concerns with the Head of Sixth Form at fortnightly tutor briefings.

A series of weekly, fortnightly and half termly reports are produced to track and monitor attendance at Key Stage 5. The attendance reports are discussed at fortnightly Sixth Form attendance meetings to monitor and agree actions to improve and celebrate students' attendance.

Students are able to keep track of their attendance through the Arbor app or web browser. Half termly attendance updates are sent to parents, in addition to them being updated if their child's attendance falls below key thresholds.

Attendance data is used diagnostically to track and monitor students' attendance. If students' attendance falls below 96%, they are placed on our 'Steps to Success' programme (see Appendix 2), created to support students and families to improve their attendance and meet the 96% target.

Little Heath's School Strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is defined as attendance below 90%. Severe absence is that which falls below 50%. These types of absence are potentially a serious problem for students. Much of the work missed during days off school is never made up, leaving these persistently absent students at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Where a student is identified as having persistent or severe absence we would prefer to work with the students and parents / carers in line with our 'Steps to Success' program, rather than prosecute. However, students with continued, low, unexpected or unexplained absence below 90% are jeopardising their 16-19 education. Similarly, if students' attendance does not improve after moving through the 'Steps to Success' program by not meeting their required attendance targets, they too are jeopardising their 16-19 education. In both situations, students are at risk of:

- not being entered for their qualification;
- having their exam entries withdrawn;
- foregoing free examination entry and will need to pay for their own entry cost;
- losing their place at Little Heath Sixth Form.

We would like to stress that we prefer to work with our students and families to improve school attendance and encourage our students back into school without having to resort to the consequences outlined above. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you are struggling to get your son / daughter to school and hopefully if we all work together we can ensure each student is in school receiving the education they deserve.

Further Reading

The Department for Education's new attendance guidance for schools can be located at: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672212/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

Appendices:

Appendix 1: The partnership between students, school and parents to improve attendance.

Expectations of LHS	Expectations of KS5 students	Expectations of KS5 parents/carers
A Sixth Form education that is dependent upon regular attendance at school. Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school and regular encouragement and rewards. Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of absence. Prompt action when a problem has been identified. Personalised support plans to improve students' attendance. Regular communication with students, parents and carers. Follow a clear approach to managing any attendance issues. Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance. Ensure Governors have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.	Attend regularly, on time and ready to learn. Attend AM & PM registration, lessons, study periods and free periods, unless home study is granted. Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance. To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school. Make every effort to arrange dental / medical appointments and driving lessons outside of school hours. Complete an absence request form if they need to leave early or request absence for half / full day.	Fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly, on time and is prepared for the day. To contact the school on the first day their child is absent for any reason and then on all subsequent days if the student is unable to contact school him/herself. To avoid taking holidays in term time. To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child from attending school. To provide evidence to support absences such as medical letters, or a note or email to explain the absences, where requested. Actively support the work of the school with any support and sanctions to improve students' attendance. Understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.

Appendix 2: LHS Sixth Form's Steps to Success Program to Improve Attendance

ATTENDANCE STEPS TO SUCCESS	
	Detail
PRE-STEP	If a student's attendance drops below 96%: This prompts a conversation from their tutor to ensure the student is aware of the implications to their learning and to ensure there are no barriers to learning. - Parents/carers receive communication to inform them that their child's attendance has been identified as needing improvement.
STEP-1	If a student's attendance does not improve or continues to fall, without explanation: Attendance target set. - Informal daily monitoring card checked by the student's tutor. - Home Study withdrawn (if appropriate) - Parents updated via school communications.
STEP-2	If a student's attendance does not improve or continues to fall, without explanation: - Attendance target set. - Daily monitoring card via Key Stage Study Manager. - Parents updated via school communications.
STEP-3	If there is no improvement, or the student's attendance has fallen further: The student and parent meet with the Head of Sixth Form. - Attendance target set. - Daily monitoring report by Head of Sixth Form. - Parents updated via school communications.
STEP-4	Despite all interventions, and in the absence of any mitigating circumstances, if there is no improvement, or the student's attendance has fallen further: - A final meeting is arranged with the Deputy Head Teacher to agree final steps. The school reserves the right to withdraw students from qualification, charge for examination entries, etc. - If attendance is below 85% students may be supported in looking for alternative Post-16 provision.