



Dear Parents and Carers,

We are pleased to share that during the last academic year, attendance in Lambeth primary schools improved from 93.8% to 94.4%, while secondary school attendance stood at 92.4%— above the national average of 91.5%. These improvements would not have been possible without your continued cooperation and support, for which we are truly grateful.

Our Commitment to Attendance

Lambeth Education Welfare Service (EWS) remains committed to improving school attendance. We believe that regular attendance is key to enhancing children and young people's life outcomes, fostering positive values, and preparing them to be active, engaged members of our community.

Parental Responsibility

As a parent or carer of a school-aged child (from the term after their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June of Year 11), you are legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly and on time.

Lateness and the 'U' Code

Punctuality is essential. Arriving late can disrupt your child's learning and affect their confidence. If your child arrives more than 30 minutes after the school's start time, they will receive a 'U' code, which is an unauthorised absence.

For example, if school starts **at 8:45 AM**, the register closes at 9:15 AM. Arrivals after this time will be marked as unauthorised. If you have moved out of the borough but your child remains at their Lambeth school, it is still your responsibility to ensure they arrive on time.

For secondary pupils, please speak with your child about the importance of punctuality. If you are experiencing difficulties, we encourage you to contact your child's school for support.

Persistent late arrival for school could lead to an educational fixed penalty notice being issued or legal proceedings.

Holidays During Term Time

Under education law, parents do not have the right to take children out of school for holidays during term time. Permission must be sought from the Headteacher, who can only authorise leave in exceptional circumstances—not for reasons such as cheaper travel.

This year, Lambeth EWS has advised schools not to issue a second fine for term-time holidays. Instead, cases will be referred to the Local Authority for potential legal action, as fines alone have not proven to be a sufficient deterrent.

Early Intervention and Support

Following continued investment in the EWS, we now have two Family Support Workers who will work alongside Educational Welfare Officers using an Early Help approach. If your child's attendance is affected by additional needs, please speak to your school about support from the Area SENCo.

In November, Lambeth will launch Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) Consultation Meetings. These panels will support pupils struggling to attend school due to mental health challenges. Referrals require parental consent and evidence of prior school interventions. The panel will include professionals from CAMHS, Educational Psychology, Early Help, Area SENCo, Lambeth's Autism Team, and EWS.

Medical Evidence

Schools have been advised to request medical evidence when a pupil's attendance falls below 93%. However, statutory guidance states that this should only be necessary in a minority of cases. In most instances, a parent's explanation that their child is unwell is sufficient.

Only when there is genuine doubt about the authenticity of an illness should schools request further evidence. This ensures that absence codes are recorded accurately and fairly.

10 Consecutive Days of Absence

Where pupils are absent from school for 10 consecutive days. Your child school have to refer to the local authority. The EWO for your child's school will have to look into the reasons as to why your child is absent from school.

Working Together

The Lambeth Education Welfare Service is committed to raising aspirations and improving life outcomes for all young people. This can only be achieved through strong partnerships between families, schools, and the wider community.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's school or email us at: educationcourtsteam@lambeth.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support.

Lambeth Education Welfare Service