

CHINLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

At Chinley School we believe that every school day counts, we pride ourselves on high levels of attendance and know that where a child's attendance is low they will miss out on valuable learning time which will have a negative effect on their outcomes. At Chinley School we celebrate good attendance through rewards and assembly recognition – we are focused on ensuring that children attend school every day.

AIMS

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Provide clear information about how attendance will be managed at Chinley School including how low attendance will be supported to improve.
- Provide parents with the information they need with regards to the school's response to requests to take holidays in term time.
- To ensure that parents understand the reasons why high levels of attendance are vital in supporting pupil progress and attainment.
- To make clear the possible actions which can be taken by the Local Authority in response to low attendance following changes made by the Department of Education.

DEFINITIONS

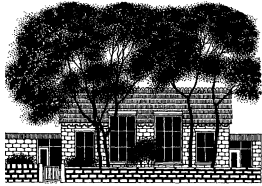
Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate unavoidable reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the Headteacher can decide on whether an absence is authorised or not. Sometimes, even if absence is supported by parent, an absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school even if the absence is supported by the parent.



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Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Someone from the school will contact parents on the first day that a child is absent from school unless the school has been notified by telephone, email or in person, to check the reason for the absence.
- School leaders will monitor pupil attendance; where patterns of non-attendance or where punctuality is an issue parents will be contacted to discuss the matter and to investigate any barriers to attendance or punctuality.
- Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time for family holidays. Such absences will only be agreed in limited exceptional circumstance; this would not include the availability of cheaper holidays.
- The school will celebrate high levels of attendance through our weekly star assemblies and associated rewards.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

- The school office staff will contact parents on the first day of absence, unless already notified, to discuss the reason for a child's absence.
- The Headteacher will have responsibility for agreeing authorised absences including family holidays in exceptional circumstances.
- The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will be responsible for following up on persistent absences to discuss ways in which the school might support improved attendance and punctuality.
- The class teacher is responsible for ensuring that attendance registers are completed accurately and in a timely manner in order that absence monitoring is accurate.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

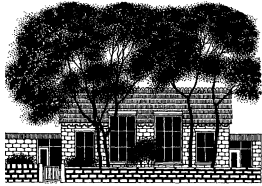
- Ensuring that their children attend school on a regular basis; they should arrive at school punctually.
- Communicating any absences in a timely manner (on the morning of absence) through the schools dedicated email address attendance@chinley.derbyshire.sch.uk, by telephone or in person.
- Meeting their legal responsibilities to ensure their child attends education.

Registration

The school doors open at **08.50am** and children are expected to be in school by **9.00am** this gives plenty of time for all pupils to come into their classroom and be ready to learn when lessons start.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for marking the attendance register at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.

All attendance records are documented using *RM Integris* software. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved in line with the relevant retention schedule



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Lateness

Children who are persistently late after close of register soon fall behind with their learning.

Any pupil who comes into school after **9.00am** will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than **9.15am** will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than **9.30am** will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

For pupil who are persistently late for school a member of the school Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will contact the parent by telephone to discuss any barriers too arriving at school on time and how the school may be able to support. Where contact cannot be made a member of the SLT will write to the parent asking that they contact the school as a priority.

Following intervention and discussion, should a pupil continue to be persistently late then the Headteacher will consider the use of Penalty Notices.

Absences

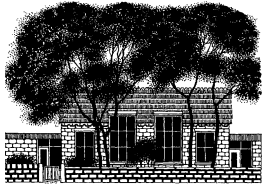
Levels of pupil attendance is monitored on a weekly basis by the Headteacher. They are provided with up to date information of pupil absence (class-by-class) and individually (persistent absences – below 90%); in addition the headteacher will use information of pupils who are at risk of persistent absence (between 91% and 94%) in order that a follow-up phone call can be made to discuss the position and offer support.

For pupil who are persistently absent from school a member of the school Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will contact the parent by telephone to discuss any barriers too arriving at school on time and how the school may be able to support. Where contact cannot be made a member of the SLT will write to the parent asking that they contact the school as a priority.

Following intervention and discussion, should a pupil continue to be persistently late then the Headteacher will consider the use of Penalty Notices.

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any contact from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers each morning to identify those pupils who are absent without explanation and, as a safeguarding requirement, make contact with the parents of these children by telephone.



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Applications for Leave of Absence in Term Time

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers **must not** give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a **Request for Leave of Absence** form available from the school office and handed in **at least 4** school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. (Attendance code G).

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least **96%**

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Should any parents be concerned about their child's attendance and punctuality they should contact Peter Lambert (Headteacher) or Jan Glover (Deputy Headteacher) to request a discussion and/or support.

If a child's attendance does not improve and absences are unauthorised this may lead to consideration of parental responsibility measures which include the issue of penalty notice fines or other statutory action.

National framework for penalty notices

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G).

If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

Policy written by Peter Lambert

Dec 2024