

# Chesterton Primary School

A member of the Active Learning Trust



<b>Statement / Policy Summary</b>	
This policy looks at the school's approach to attendance, taking into account national and local expectations.	
<b>Date ratified:</b>	17.10.2023
<b>Date of review:</b>	October 2023

<b>Equalities Impact Statement</b>	
Has this policy fully considered the school's equality objectives and statement?	Yes
Is there any impact upon the school's equality objectives?	Yes
If 'yes', are these clearly described and their impact assessed?	Positive impact upon inclusion

## 1. Statement of Intent

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of staff, parents, governors and authority involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

## 2. Aims

- Maximise the attendance of all pupils.
- Provide a positive and welcoming environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- Monitor and support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.

## 3. School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority / Trust. The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, take a register at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A). Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent / carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 has removed all references to family holidays. This means that a leave of absence will only be granted by the Headteacher due to exceptional circumstances. Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case by case basis, parents / carers must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

## 4. Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a mutually agreed legitimate reason and the school has received the correct notification from a parent / carer. For example, if a child has been unwell for a short period of time and the parent / carer has written a note, reported it on ParentMail or telephoned the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school for a birthday treat during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent / carer. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## 1. Punctuality

Classroom doors are open for children from 8:30am with morning registration taking place at 8:45am. The main pupil gates are locked just after 8:40am so pupils arriving after this time are directed to sign in at the front office. Pupils arriving at the office between 8:45am and 9:15am will be recorded as late before the register (L). The registers 'close' at 9:15am. Those who arrive after 9:15am will be marked with an unauthorised late absence (U).

## 2. First day of absence calling

Should a child be absent from school and no contact from parents has been received, staff will follow the first day of absence calling procedure (appendix D).

## 3. Roles & Responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

### **Pupils should:**

- Do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Inform a trusted adult if there is a reason for not attending school for example if they are being bullied.
- Be happy and encourage others to feel happy by encouraging friendship and a sense of belonging.

### **Parents should**

- Keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum, organising medical appointments outside of school hours or in the holidays.
- Offer a reason for any period of absence or lateness.
- Telephone, email or use ParentMail to contact the school office before 8:40am on each day of absence. Parents should identify a reason for absence and an expected date of return. Proof of the reason for absence may be requested if the school deems this to be appropriate.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time wearing the correct uniform and having appropriate equipment to learn.

- Organise family trips during school holiday periods.
- Seek permission for leave of absence in term time before booking this.
- Support their child in maintaining high levels of attendance and recognising their successes and achievement.

**Governors should:**

- Set annual targets for attendance.
- Monitor progress towards these annual targets for attendance.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

**Senior Leaders and Attendance Officer should:**

- Ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- Work in partnership with parents / carers if attendance of their children drops below 96%.
- Work in partnership with the Local Authority and Trust to identify children whose attendance is significantly below national expectations (90% or lower and / 8+ unauthorised absences).
- Provide governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- Communicate with parents / carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Write and share parental contracts to improve attendance of their child.
- Make appropriate judgments as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

**Class teachers should:**

- Maintain class registers accurately, providing an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- Organise remote learning for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.
- Raise any issues which may affect a child's attendance.
- Create welcoming, nurturing environments with interesting and engaging learning opportunities to promote good attendance.
- Ensure high quality teaching throughout the term, including within the last weeks and days of term.

**Office staff should:**

- Monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports where necessary.
- Ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for every child, by ParentMail, email or phone.

- Record the reasons for absence in the registers.
- Undertake attendance calls each morning for children whose parents have not contacted the school by 9:15am.
- Alert the Designated Persons before 10am if a child deemed as vulnerable is not in school.
- Alert the Designated Persons before 10:30am if a child is absent and no reason has been obtained from a parent or carer.
- Alert the Designated Persons if a child has been absent from school for 3 or more consecutive days.
- Liaise with the Headteacher about whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

## 4. Procedures

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. The office staff will chase up any parents who have not provided a reason for their child's absence. All explanations are recorded on [sims.net](https://www.sims.net).

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then contact the family in order to check on the safety of the child.

Should there be continuing absence or if there is no improvement in regular attendance, parents will first receive notice letters. Should this not support better attendance, a parental contract will be written and shared with parents. Please see the flowchart in Appendix B.

The Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO) will be contacted if:

- a) Attendance falls below 90% with the majority of absences being unauthorised over an eight week period and / or
- b) Eight unauthorised absences within an eight week period.

Persistent absence (PA) is a term used by the government to describe a child's attendance falling below 90%.

### **Requests for leave of absence**

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent / carer may legitimately request leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances**. We expect parents to complete a 'Request for Absence' form which can be requested from the office.

The Headteacher will then decide whether the absence can be authorised.

If the absence is not authorised but the leave taken anyway, a penalty notice may be issued.

## 5. Penalty Notices

These are issued by Cambridgeshire County Council and may be given out for failure to ensure regular school attendance as below:

- a) Unauthorised attendance – less than 90% over a given period.
- b) Unauthorised term time leave (holiday) for any parent **with** Parental Responsibility (PR) who takes a child out of school for term time leave for three consecutive days or more.

## 6. Promoting good attendance

Each year, the school sets a target of attendance. We aim for a minimum of 96% attendance.

Each week, the school promotes class attendance figures on a children's display and on Class Dojo.

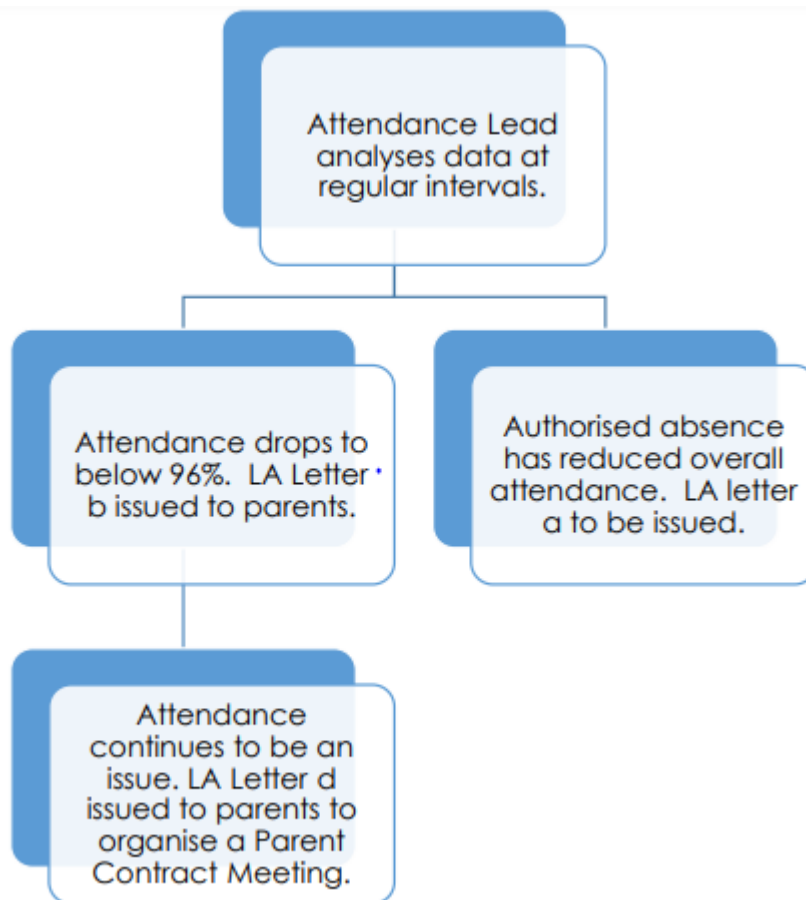
At the end of each half-term, children receive a certificate if they have achieved 100% attendance.

## Appendix A – Attendance Codes

/ \	Registration present
#	School closed to pupils
B	Off-site educational activity
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registered (attending two different settings)
E	Exclusion
G	Holiday that has not been agreed by the Headteacher
H	Holiday that has been agreed by the Headteacher
I	Illness (not appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late arrival before the register has closed (by 9am)
M	Appointments (i.e. medical)
N	No reason given
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Sports
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Arriving after the register has closed, deemed as unauthorised



## Appendix B – Flowchart



- Should a parent / carer object to the Headteacher's decision regarding term time absence, the LA letter h will be issued.
- Should school staff suspect an absence was actually term time leave, the LA letter g will be issued to parents / carers.

## Appendix C – Template Letters

### Example letter from the Local Authority – Authorised Absence (a / 1)

Date

Name and address of parent / carer

Dear Parent,

**Re: Child Name:** xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

This letter is for your information so you do not need to take any action.

We understand that xxx has had authorised absence recently and that you called the school every day to keep us informed. We would just like to let you know how this has affected xxx 's attendance which is currently at «percentage attendance»%.

Attendance monitoring is a vital part in ensuring that children who are absent from school because of their medical needs maintain their education. If you child is absent from school for over 10 days, it may be necessary for us to seek support for your child. Please ensure that we are fully aware of any medical issues that may affect your child's attendance.

Please continue to work with us. You are more than welcome to contact us to discuss any queries or concerns you may have.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Andrews

Headteacher

## Example Letter (b)

Date

Name and address of parent / carer

Dear Parent,

**Re: Child Name:** xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

We have noticed that your child <forename>'s attendance has deteriorated; I have enclosed a copy of {{forename}}'s attendance record so that you can view a detailed breakdown of your child's absence from school.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning and, as I am sure you are aware, it is a legal requirement. We will continue to monitor {{forename}}'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement over the next few weeks. If the absence is due to a medical reason, please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on {{forename}} attending school regularly, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Andrews

Headteacher

Enc. Record of attendance

## Example Letter – Suspected Term Time Leave (g)

Date

Name and address of parent / carer

Dear Parent,

**Re: Child Name:** xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

I am writing about {{forename}}'s absence from school from <<date>> to <<date>>.

From information received from other sources, we believe that this was due to term time leave. Unfortunately, you have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for the absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register. However, if the absence was not due to exceptional circumstances but due to illness, please provide medical evidence to support this.

If we do not hear from you within the next 7 days, {{forename}}'s absence will be recorded as 'G', denoting an unauthorised term time leave.

If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice Fine can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer in respect of each child who is absent from school. Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings being initiated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Andrews

Headteacher

## Example Letter – Negative Response to Term Time Leave Request (h)

Date

Name and Address of parent / carer

Dear Parent,

**Re: Child Name:** xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

Thank you for completing the term time leave request form as per procedure.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 was amended in September 2013. The amendments made clear that Headteachers **may not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist.

We have considered your application carefully and the reasons for the absence you have highlighted. However, on this occasion, we do not believe that the explanation provided can be justified as "exceptional circumstances".

We are aware that families have had limited opportunities to take leave of absence but we are also mindful of the impact that COVID has had on children's learning, and we must all do our utmost to minimise the disruption, to allow for their future academic outcomes and life chances.

Should you still decide to continue to take your child out of school during term time then please note that the absence will be recorded as 'G', denoting an unauthorised term time leave.

If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice Fine can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer in respect of each child who is absent from school. **The amount of the penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 22 to 28 days.** Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings being initiated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Andrews

Headteacher

## Example Letter – Invite to PCM Meeting letter (d)

Date

Name and address of parent / carer

Dear Parent,

**Re: Child Name:** xxx **DOB:** xxx **School:** xxx

I am writing to inform you that «(forename)»'s attendance is still causing concern. We are aware that many pupils were unable to access education due to COVID and school attendance is now more important than ever. Therefore, we need to meet with you urgently to discuss the situation.

You are required to attend a meeting with a member of the Attendance Team to discuss this matter further at the date and time below.

Date: xxx Time: xxx

Should «(forename)»'s attendance remain irregular; we may have to refer this matter to the Local Authority who could consider more formal action. This might result in a Penalty Notice Fine and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996**, and a fine of up to **£2500 and/or 3 months in prison**.

Absence due to self-limiting illness can be authorised in the first instance but a child who is absent frequently due to a medical reason, including repeated self-limiting illnesses, medical evidence will be required.

We look forward to meeting you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support your child in making good progress. I hope that you will work with us to improve «(forename)»'s attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be initiated. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on the number above.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Andrews

Headteacher

Encs Record of Attendance

## Example Letter – Invite to unauthorised attendance letter (2)

Date

Name and address of parent

Dear Parent

Re:     **Name:** xxx                    **Dob:** xxx

I am writing to advise you that «forename»'s school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to «percentage\_attendance»%. As a result of this, we are becoming concerned that «forename» is missing a significant part of learning. I have enclosed a copy of «forename»'s attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning and, as I am sure you are aware, it is a legal requirement. We are all mindful of the impact of COVID on children's learning, however, we must all do our utmost to minimise the disruption, to allow for their future academic outcomes and life chances. I will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason, please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which they are registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on «forename» attending school regularly or if you are concerned about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me. However, it does no harm in speaking with the teacher or attendance team, because together we can make a difference.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Andrews

Headteacher

Enc Record of attendance  
School Attendance Leaflet



## Appendix D – First Day of Absence Calling Procedure



### **First Day of Absence Calling Procedure**

#### **Absence**

1. Parents/carers should contact the school by 8:40am each day to report absence.
2. Any child not present at the close of registers receives a phone call to parent by 9.30am. If no contact can be made, a home visit is undertaken for vulnerable pupils and within 3 days for other pupils - see *First Day Calling Protocol* below.
3. Any child who has been absent from school for 3 days or more - even if they have reported absence - must receive a home visit on the 3rd, 6th, 9th and subsequent every 3rd day.
4. On the 3rd occasion a child is late after the registers close, the Attendance Lead will call the parent and invite them in for a meeting.

#### **First Day Calling Protocol**

This procedure should be followed every day for every pupil unaccounted for, even if they called in the day before.

1. Registers close at 9:15am.
2. Registers checked on SIMS by Attendance Lead by 9.15am (known absences are recorded on SIMS)
3. Lates before and after registers close are recorded on SIMS.
4. Lates after registers closes are also recorded on Inentry.
5. All children who are absent, whose parents have not reported the absence, receive a phone call and an email from the Attendance Lead by 9.30am.
6. The absence and the actions taken are recorded on MyConcern including any response from parents.
7. If no contact has been made by 10:30am, Attendance Lead and SLT/DSL undertake a home visit within 3 days of absence (same day and as soon as possible for vulnerable pupils)
8. If still no contact, referrals to social care take place and a request via 101 for a welfare check is made while continued attempts to contact via phone, email, home visits take place.