

Chesterton Primary School

A member of the Active Learning Trust



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

Equalities Impact Statement	
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 and other family occasions/events 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 8:50am. The main pupil gates are locked just after 8:40 am 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 9:00am. 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 C).

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 / 6+ 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 8:40am.
- Alert the Designated Persons before 10am if a child deemed as vulnerable is not in school.
- Alert the Designated Persons before 9.30am 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** and/or religious holidays. We expect parents to complete a 'Request for Absence' form which can be requested from the office and meet with the Headteacher 4 weeks before the absence is due to take place.

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.

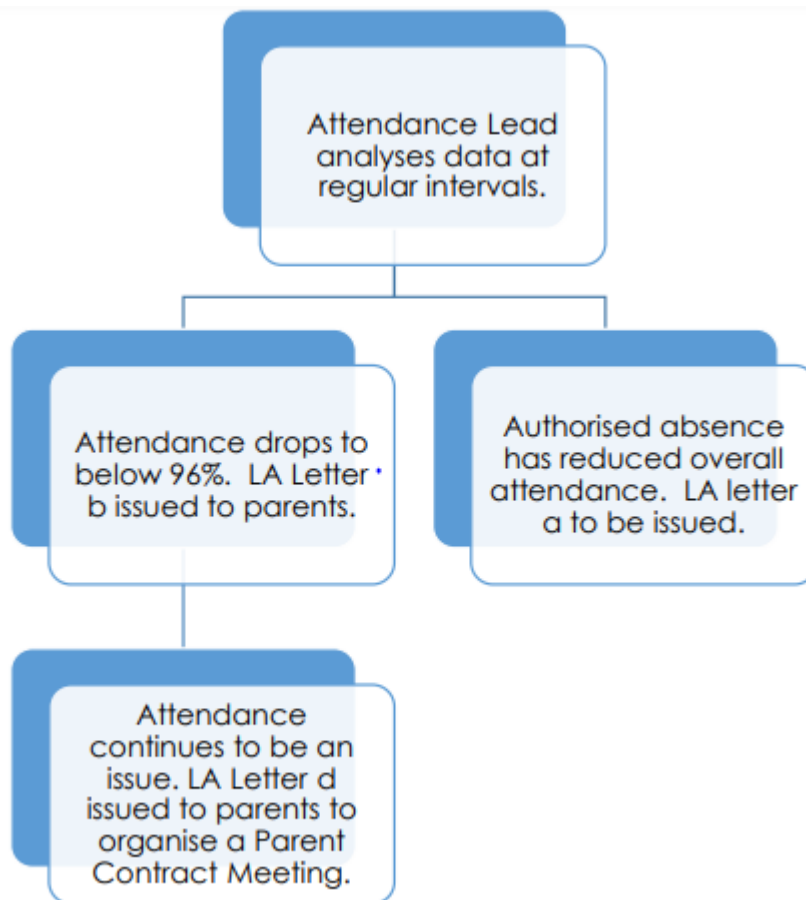
Each week, the school promotes class attendance figures on a children's display and on Class Dojo.

At Chesterton Primary, we share class attendance figures in our Monday assemblies. If a class achieve 100% attendance for the previous week, they get to roll the dice! When they roll the dice, they move their game piece around the Attendanceopoly board and win a prize!

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 – 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 9am.
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 Inventory.
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 10am, 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.