



Chalkwell Hall Infant School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed and Approved by Governors

Date: Spring 25

Review date: Spring 27

AIMS

This school is committed to providing an effective and efficient education for all pupils. We will do all we can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance; any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

The school will actively promote the value of regular attendance. We recognise the correlation between excellent attendance and pupil outcomes and our obligation to instil good attitudes and habits so that our learners of today are prepared for tomorrow's world. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of all Chalkwell Hall Infant school employees.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in legal action being taken against them.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise 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 will be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

DATA PROTECTION

We will abide by GDPR to ensure information is protected and confidential. Systems are in place to ensure personal data is kept secure, whether it is held on paper or electronically. We will use a child's personal data in order to help them learn and ensure they are safe. No personal or sensitive data will be used other than for the purpose for which it was originally obtained. Where it is legally required, or necessary for another reason allowed under data protection law, we may share personal information about a child with:

- schools that the pupils attend after leaving us
- our local authority – to meet our legal duties to share certain information with it, such as concerns about pupils' safety and exclusions
- the Department for Education (DfE)
- the child's family and representatives
- educators and examining bodies
- our regulator (Ofsted)
- suppliers and service providers – so they can provide the services we have contracted them for
- central and local government
- our auditors
- health authorities
- professional advisors and consultants
- police forces, courts, tribunals
- professional bodies

For the same reasons, we may gather information about pupils from some other places too, for example, other educational settings, the local council and the government.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations, May 2018, applicants have a right to access their personal data (Subject Access Request) whether submitted as an application or otherwise by sending a written request to Kerrie Lawton, Data Protection Officer, education@chalkwellhall-inf.southend.sch.uk . If you believe that the personal data we hold is incorrect then please notify us. If data is found to be incorrect then we will take appropriate steps to resolve the situation.

Your information will be held in our school office, and information held about you on paper will be held in our offices which may change from time to time or increase if we acquire other offices.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

What is an authorised absence?

Absences are authorised when the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be out of school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. Acceptable reasons for absence may include:

- Illness or injury – of a nature which prevents the student from undertaking normal school work or is contagious. Please refer to the NHS Website for further guidance. [NHS – Is my child too ill for school?](#)
- Emergency medical/ dental appointments. Please note that for medical appointments we will authorise a morning or an afternoon session. If circumstances dictate that a whole day is required, please provide evidence to support this.
- Family bereavement
- Day of religious observance
- Fixed Term Suspension – results from a decision taken by the school. The school is responsible for setting work for the excluded pupils.
- If permission has been granted in advance by the Headteacher.

Excessive amounts of authorised absence can disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Excessive authorised absences can be as damaging to a child's education as unauthorised absence and will be followed up within the school's attendance procedures.

Absence due to Illness

Where there are persistent concerns, the school will require supporting evidence of medical intervention. This may take the form of:

- A note from the practice nurse
- Proof of prescription
- Packaging for prescribed medication
- Medical card stamped at practice (this will only authorise the session of the appointment).

There is an expectation that parents/carers provide school with regularly updated medical evidence to support those students with long term medical conditions.

NB: Minor ailments, as defined by the NHS (coughs/colds, sore throat, headache, stomach ache and period pains) are not justifiable reasons to miss school and absences for these reasons will not be routinely authorised.

What is an unauthorised absence?

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. Unacceptable reasons for absence may include but are not limited to:

- Minor ailments (as above).
- Visiting relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Looking after siblings
- Truancy
- Arriving at school too late to get a mark
- Haircuts
- Transport difficulties
- Slept late
- Unauthorised holidays.

HOLIDAYS AND EXTENDED HOLIDAYS

The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child out of school during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application had been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. Whilst the Headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Any request for leave in excess of 10 sessions or more (5 consecutive days) may result in a fine being issued by Southend City Council –

Headteachers will only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and each case will now be assessed individually after consultation with a member of the Pastoral team.

Requests for Leave of Absence during Term Time

- Requests should be made by completing a holiday request form (available from the office) to the Headteacher
- Parents/carers will then be advised in writing, as to whether the holiday/leave of absence request has been authorised.
- The Department of Education advises that Leave of Absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The DfE have not provided any guidelines as to what they

would consider to be exceptional circumstances. This is solely at the discretion of the Headteacher.

- If your request is not authorised and you decide to take your child out of school you may be subject to a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority on your return. Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23 (1), the issuing of a Penalty Notice incurs a fine of £80 per child, per parent, if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days (NB. In the case where the penalty has not been paid within 28 Days of issue, the case may be escalated to prosecution in Magistrates Court for non-school attendance).

Monitoring and Arrangements for Sick Children

- Attendance issues regarding sick children should be dealt with by the SENCO in liaison with the Early Help Team – change to Access and Inclusion Team.
- SENCO to liaise with medical personnel (with parental permission).
- SENCO will ensure that children who should be receiving tuition are referred to that service.
- SENCO to liaise with the medical professionals when necessary.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance and prepare pupils for their lives beyond school. Equally, parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly. All staff are committed to working with parents and students, as this is the best way to ensure the highest level of attendance for our school community.

- Chalkwell Hall Infant School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow-up action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum is offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs and children feel successful.
- Alongside a varied curriculum the school recognises that education is not purely what goes on in classrooms. Initiatives such as a themed day, a charity event, or a dress up day can all contribute to improved attendance across the school.
- We do all we can to build positive, professional relations with families, so that we can have honest, sometimes difficult, conversations about pupil attendance and support families to recognise the importance of regular attendance at school.
- The Head Teacher will endeavour to have a member of SLT on the main gate every morning to meet and greet pupils and make relationships with families.
- Our Pastoral team are on hand to encourage reluctant children into school in the mornings.
- Southend-on-Sea City Council School Attendance Service are responsible for regularly collecting and analysing data from attendance returns each half-term. Discussions are held between the Pastoral team and the Local Authority in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.

- The Attendance Officer will use data to analyse patterns, or attendance trends within a particular cohort and implement improvement strategies accordingly.
- Individuals will receive certificates for termly/yearly attendance above 98%. Punctuality is rewarded weekly. An Attendance Class of the Month certificate is awarded in celebration assembly.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school website, parents' evenings, etc) of the importance of good attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return. The school has access to AVI Robots, available from Southend Council, which can transmit learning directly to the home or hospital if a pupil is unable to attend for a prolonged period of time.
- The Headteacher will report on attendance to the school's Governing Body.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies – Educational Psychology Service, Social Care and other agencies – when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents or Carers

Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, (Education Act 1996).

They should:

- Ensure that children attend the school unless there is a very good reason for not doing so.
- Try to ensure that appointments with doctors and dentists etc. happen outside school time.
- Make sure that children arrive on time. School gates open at 8.35am and close at 8.50am. The school day finishes at 3pm.
- If your child is late to school, you must report to the main reception and electronically sign your child in, indicating what they would like for lunch. A member of staff will take your child to class if they need reassurance.
- Ensure that children arrive in good time, ready to learn, with the equipment they require, following a good night's sleep. Children can better settle into the day when they aren't feeling rushed. Children can become anxious about walking late into the classroom when work has already begun.
- Report absence before 9.20am, on each day of the absence via telephone/email attendance@chalkwellhallinfants.co.uk letting our Attendance Officer know the reason for the absence
- Send their child to school, when they may be just a little 'unwell'. The school will make contact if necessary.
- Arrange holidays outside school time.

- Contact the school if their child becomes reluctant to attend so that the underlying cause can be investigated quickly.
- Keep the school informed of any home/life changes that may impact on their child's keenness to attend school regularly. Please keep us informed of any changes to your contact details, or change of address.
- Advise the school if the child takes on the role of young carer. The school is aware of challenges faced by young carers and will be supportive accordingly.

Pupils should

- Help parents to make sure that they get to the school on time by being organised and cooperative.
- Come into school before or following medical or other appointments.
- Come into school if they feel just a little 'under the weather' or tired and tell their teacher. (Parents will be contacted if needed).
- Share any worries about coming to school with class teacher and/or a member of the Pastoral Team

Governing Body should

- Understand their role in the monitoring of attendance and provide adequate challenge which results in improvement.
- Be familiar with current legislation.
- Ensure the Head Teacher reports on attendance at each Governing Body meeting.
- Attend any training sessions on attendance.

The Head Teacher should

- Have day to day responsibility for attendance and ensure that the school meets the legal requirements, sets required targets for attendance and unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures.
- Report attendance figures (including groups) to Governors.
- Publish on a prominent notice board within the school, weekly attendance data and our Attendance Class of the Month winner.
- Ensure parents are made aware of their responsibilities through policies, communication and at the point of admission.
- Fulfil their duty under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the Local Education Authority where there is a poor pattern of attendance or a pupil has been absent for more than two weeks.

Admissions and Attendance Officer should

- Keep an overview of attendance
- Ensure attendance information is shared widely, including providing a copy of our attendance policy summary for all new joiners.
- Will make reasonable enquiries to contact families where the absence is unexplained (on the first day of absence), if no contact is made consider making a home visit and/or informing Social Care.
- Report a pupil as Missing in Education when they have missed 10 school days without explanation

- Inform the Family Liaison Officer of absence of children in care or known to Social Care, on a daily basis
- Follow procedures given in Keeping Children Safe in education with regards to Children Missing in Education (CME)
- Liaise with and meet regularly with the Pastoral team
- Help to investigate any evidence of any reluctant attendance
- Make formal contact with parents following any concerns
- Provide initiatives in school to highlight the importance of good attendance.
- Reward good and/or improved attendance with certificates and/or prizes
- Liaise with Head Teacher
- Monitor completion of registers on a daily basis. Registers close at 9.20am. Arrivals between 8.50am and 9.20am will be marked with an L code. L codes won't affect the pupil's attendance figure. Arrival after 9.20am will be marked with a U code. Please note, a U code counts as a missed session and will affect the pupil's attendance percentage.
- Contact parents to investigate absence, build positive relationships with families
- Inform parents when absence becomes a concern, alerting them to the fact that their child's attendance is below the 90% threshold.
- Highlight causes for concern to Headteacher, Class Teacher and Pastoral team
- Record absence concerns on CPOMS and refer to LA/Access and Inclusion team where necessary
- Along with the Pastoral team members, conduct regular whole-school attendance reviews
- Identify pupils and families in need of support and intervention
- Promote parental engagement by providing opportunity for parents to come into school, e.g our coffee mornings for families where English is not the first language.
- Chair School Attendance Meetings to identify and remove barriers to regular school attendance, offer support and remind parents of their legal responsibilities.
- Conduct home visit assessments where no explanation for absence has been given and school has cause for concern.
- Provide teachers with data on attendance, alerting them to concerns and patterns

Class Teachers should

- Actively encourage good attendance & punctuality
- Monitor erratic attendance and lateness and report it to the Admissions and Attendance Officer
- Raise attendance concerns at Parents Consultation sessions concerns about attendance & punctuality
- Complete registration process appropriately being mindful of its legal status.
- Record the current level of attendance & punctuality on school reports

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS

When a pupil is absent for no apparent reason it is the duty of all staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons they should bear in mind factors that could relate to the child protection, behaviour, and the anti-bullying policies. The class teacher will have

a particular role to play in identifying reasons for absence and addressing such issues, with the support of the whole school staff.

A STAGED APPROACH

Stage 1

In the first instance, attendance concerns will be dealt with by the Admissions and Attendance officer. Where attendance falls short of our expectation:-

1. Class teacher to speak to parents about any barriers to regular school attendance. Teacher to explain the impact of missed learning.
 2. Attendance Officer to regularly inform parents when their child's attendance dips below the 90% threshold.
 3. Attendance Officer to follow up with a conversation with parents if absences continue over the next 2 weeks.
 4. If there is no improvement after a further 2 weeks, parents will be written to (stage 1 - Absence Letter), outlining the child's absence and requesting their attendance at a support meeting with the Admission and Attendance officer and Family Liaison officer. At this meeting reasons for absence will be discussed along with how the school can support improved attendance. A discussion with the family will decide whether an Early Help Family Assessment (EHFA) should be completed. Parents will be given a copy of our Attendance policy. Targets will be set and agreed upon by both parties.
- Any unreported absence following the attendance support meeting may result in an unannounced visit from a member of the Senior Leadership/Pastoral Team or an attendance officer from Southend City Council (school staff, where appropriate may escort children to school).
 - All further absences will need to be supported by medical evidence.

If parents fail to attend, the meeting will be rescheduled once. If parents fail to attend the rescheduled meeting, the Attendance Officer will telephone to inform them that attendance is now under review for the next 4 weeks and we will move to Stage 2 (Attendance Support Meeting) if there are any absences without medical evidence during this time.

If attendance remains below targets;

Stage 2 (Attendance Support Meeting)

- The school will contact parents by letter, inviting them to a meeting with the Family Liaison Officer and Attendance Officer. The Local Authority School Attendance Officer from the Local Authority will also be present. Where parents fail to attend this meeting, it will not be rescheduled, unless there are mitigating circumstances. When parents do not attend, a letter will be sent home outlining expectations and attendance targets.
- During the Attendance Support Meeting, the school will complete a parenting contract outlining discussion points of the meeting, support offered and action plan agreed. The Irregular Attendance Process will be explained at this meeting and it will be

ascertained if there are any reasons why the fast track process will not be followed. (Please see below for regular Attendance Process criteria).

If there is not significant improvement during the 4 week review period, Southend City Council will follow procedures to escalate their support.

- Any unreported absence following the attendance support meeting may result in an unannounced visit from a member of the Senior Leadership/Pastoral Team or an attendance officer from Southend City Council (school staff, where appropriate may escort children to school).
- Please note: Where parents are giving ill health as a reason for continued absence without medical verification a referral will be made to the school nurse for permission to contact the pupil's GP.
- In the unlikely event that the attendance support meeting is not successful then an any of the following can be put in place:-

The Attendance Panel may be considered which is led by the Governing Body. This would involve the Head Teacher and a representative from the Governing Body in creating an intense support plan to be put in place.

Irregular Attendance Process

The pupil being considered for fast track will have:-

1. Have an attendance rate of 90% or less within the previous 10 weeks.
2. Have 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the current academic year.
3. Is not looked after by the Local Authority.
4. The school has evidence of pre referral work and supportive interventions undertaken by the school (stage 1).
5. The parent or pupil has not identified any valid reasons or barriers why they can not attend school on a regular and punctual basis.

Case Work (Level 3) following an attendance support meeting and review.
Court proceedings may follow.

If attendance remains below targets;

Southend City Council will continue working with the family to support them to ensure their child regularly and punctually attends school. If school attendance continues to be poor the Council may pursue legal action.