CHALKWELL HALL INFANT SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed and Approved by Governors
Date: Summer 26
Review date: Summer 27

This policy has been reviewed by the Local Authority

AIMS

This school is committed to providing an effective and inclusive education for all pupils. We work closely with families to promote excellent attendance and ensure that every child is supported to attend school regularly and punctually.

We recognise the strong link between good attendance and pupil outcomes. We aim to identify any barriers to attendance early and work with families to address them quickly and effectively. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of all staff at Chalkwell Hall Infant School.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

Only the school can authorise absence. Where no explanation is received, or the reason is not accepted, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

In some cases, unauthorised absence may result in involvement from the Local Authority, which may include the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

DATA PROTECTION

We comply with UK GDPR and data protection legislation. We ensure that all personal information is handled securely and used only for the purposes for which it is collected.

We may share pupil information where there is a legal basis to do so, including with:

- The Department for Education (DfE)
- The Local Authority
- Schools that pupils move on to
- Ofsted and other regulators
- Health professionals and services supporting the child
- Other agencies where required to safeguard children or meet legal duties

Parents and carers have the right to request access to their child's personal data (Subject Access Request) by contacting the school Data Protection Officer.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

Authorised Absence

Absence may be authorised where the school is satisfied that there is a valid reason. This may include:

- Illness or injury preventing attendance
- Medical or dental appointments (where unavoidable during school hours)
- Emergency or unavoidable family circumstances
- Religious observance
- Fixed-term suspension

Where a child has repeated or prolonged absence due to illness, the school may request supporting information to help us understand how best to support the child's attendance.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will be recorded as unauthorised where no acceptable reason is provided. This may include:

- Holidays taken in term time without permission
- Shopping, birthdays or leisure activities
- Visiting relatives
- Transport issues or sleeping in late
- Arriving after the register has closed

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME AND PENALTY NOTICES

The law does not give parents an automatic right to take children out of school during term time. Headteachers may only grant leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances**, and this must be requested in advance using the school's application form.

Family holidays are not considered exceptional circumstances and will not normally be authorised.

Penalty Notices

The Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice where a child has:

- **10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school-week period** (a school week is any week in which at least one school session takes place), or
- **unauthorised leave of absence for 5 consecutive school days (10 sessions)** taken during term time without authorisation, or
- repeated instances of unauthorised absence that meet the Local Authority threshold for intervention

Each school day consists of two sessions (morning and afternoon).

Where parents are separated, the fine may be issued only to the parent who is responsible for the absence.

Penalty Notice Charges

Where issued, the current fines are:

- £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days
- Rising to £160 per parent, per child if paid between 22 and 28 days

If a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year period, it is charged at the higher rate of £160 per parent, per child.

If a parent receives a third Penalty Notice within that 3-year period, the Local Authority will consider alternative legal action instead of issuing further notices, which may include prosecution.

Failure to pay a Penalty Notice may also result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, where fines of up to £2,500 per parent may be issued.

Important Information

- All requests for leave of absence must be made in advance
- Retrospective requests will not normally be considered
- Only the Headteacher can authorise absence
- For children of compulsory school age, i.e the term after their 5th birthday, where leave is not authorised and the child is taken out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority

PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

We aim to create a welcoming, supportive environment where children feel valued and want to attend school. Strategies include:

- A positive and inclusive school ethos
- High-quality, engaging curriculum
- Strong relationships with families
- Early identification of attendance concerns
- Daily welcome and pastoral support for pupils
- Regular monitoring of attendance data
- Rewards and celebration of good attendance and punctuality
- Clear communication with parents and carers

We recognise that some families may need additional support. Where concerns arise, the Pastoral team, along with class teachers will work collaboratively with families and other agencies to remove barriers to attendance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time. We ask that families:

- Ensure children attend school every day unless genuinely unwell
- Avoid booking holidays during term time
- Inform the school promptly on the first day of absence
- Attend meetings where attendance is a concern
- Work with the school to address any barriers to attendance
- Keep contact details up to date

Pupils

We encourage pupils to:

- Attend school regularly and on time
- Share any worries about school with a trusted adult
- Take pride in their attendance and learning

Governors

Governors will:

- Monitor attendance regularly
- Hold the school to account for attendance outcomes
- Ensure attendance policies comply with statutory guidance

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall leadership of attendance procedures
- Ensuring legal requirements are met
- Reporting attendance to governors
- Overseeing attendance strategies and interventions

Attendance and Admissions Officer

The Attendance and Admissions Officer will:

- Monitor daily attendance and punctuality
- Follow up unexplained absences
- Contact parents where concerns arise
- Maintain accurate attendance records
- Work with families and external agencies where needed
- Support attendance improvement plans and interventions

Class Teachers

Class teachers will:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality
- Monitor patterns of absence
- Raise concerns with the Attendance Officer

- Support positive relationships with families

ATTENDANCE CONCERNS AND SUPPORT

Where attendance becomes a concern, the school will take a supportive, staged approach.

Stage 1 – School Support

- Initial concern discussed with parents
- Attendance monitored closely
- Support offered to address barriers
- If no improvement, a formal meeting will be arranged
- An action plan will be agreed with the family

Stage 2 – Formal Support Meeting

If attendance does not improve:

- A meeting will be held with school staff and, where appropriate, the Local Authority
- A clear support plan and targets will be agreed
- Attendance will be closely reviewed over a set period
- Further escalation may follow if there is no improvement

FURTHER ACTION

Where attendance does not improve despite support, the school may refer to the Local Authority Attendance Service. This may result in legal intervention, including Penalty Notices or prosecution in line with statutory guidance.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Attendance is monitored regularly by school leaders and reported to Governors. This policy will be reviewed in line with statutory guidance and local authority expectations.