



# Attendance and Lateness Policy

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Agreed by governing body: Summer 2018

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Signed

Chair of Governors:

Headteacher:

### **Introduction, aims, purpose of policy**

We expect all children on roll to attend every day on time, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. Once a child is enrolled at school, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day, unless prevented from doing so by illness or other exceptional circumstances for which absence is authorised by the school. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. This register will also indicate whether an absence was 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.

Our aims and objectives in relation to pupils' attendance are to:

- maximise attendance so that all pupils can gain full access to our curriculum and be enabled to reach their full academic potential and achieve a high level of personal and social well-being;
- ensure children are on time and ready to start their lessons;
- eliminate unauthorised absence;
- discourage families from arranging holidays during school terms;
- ensure that parents and carers understand clearly when it is appropriate to keep their children off school and when this constitutes unauthorised absence;
- ensure that school staff and parents are familiar with and adhere to our procedures for registering pupils' attendance, and reporting, recording and following up absence or lateness;
- ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the importance of regular and consistent attendance as well as ensuring that their children come to school on time;
- make clear to parents the consequences of failing to ensure that their children attend school;

### **Policy summary**

The first part of the policy describes the role of the parents and their statutory responsibilities. If a child is absent then parents should report this to the school giving the reasons. The school will decide whether the absence is authorised or un-authorised. Requests for leave of absence during term time are strongly discouraged and if the request is because of a holiday this will be always unauthorised. In the unavoidable case of long-term absence caused by, for example illness, the school will do what it can to ensure the child's education does not suffer. Where a child is repeatedly late or absent then the Local Authority Education Welfare Service will become involved. The governing body recognises the importance of attendance and lateness; it sets targets for the school and monitors the data on a regular basis.

### **Please also refer to the following policies and documents**

- Whole school vision statement
- Equality of Opportunity Policy

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## **1 Parental role and responsibilities**

- 1.1 Once a child is enrolled at school, parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day, unless prevented from doing so by illness or other exceptional circumstances for which absence is authorised by the school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. This register will also indicate whether an absence was 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'.
- 1.3 Definition of '**authorised absence**': an absence is classified as authorised when the school has ascertained that a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Exceptional cases of religious observances or particular family circumstances may also result in an authorised absence being granted by the school. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, or allows a child to stay away from school to celebrate a family birthday or go on a family outing, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
- 1.4 Definition of '**unauthorised absence**': an absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## **2 Procedure if a child is absent**

- 2.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office staff, who will endeavour to contact a parent or carer.  

The school encourages parents to telephone the school to inform them of their child's absence through illness, on the first morning of absence. This prevents school office staff having to make numerous phone calls and provides reassurance of a child's safety in the event that parents cannot be contacted by telephone, for any reason.
- 2.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence, and confirm its duration, even if the parent telephoned the school on the first day of absence.
- 2.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has an unavoidable medical appointment.
- 2.4 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 be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

## **3 Requests for leave of absence for a child**

- 3.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible and do not miss out on crucial learning which may put them at an educational disadvantage. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances in which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special religious or family event (such exceptional circumstances would not include normal events such as birthdays or regular religious ceremonies). We expect parents and carers to contact the school to obtain authorisation at least a week in advance.

- 3.2 Parents and carers have no statutory right to withdraw their children from school for a family holiday. Children are required to attend school for 190 days in a school year, leaving 175 days of weekends and school holidays. Parents and carers should always endeavour to arrange family holidays when their children are not required to be in school.
- 3.3 Absences directly before or after school holidays may not be automatically authorised and you may be asked for medical or other evidence to support the absence.
- 3.4 Our school considers pupils' continuous attendance at school to be so essential for their academic achievement that it is not our policy to authorise holidays during term time. Children will be marked as having an un-authorised absence in all cases if they are absent because they are on holiday.

#### **4 Long-term absence**

- 4.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send work home, so that, where possible, the child can keep in touch with the learning going on in their class.
- 4.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school in extreme circumstances may make arrangements for the child to be given some tuition outside school, where possible.

#### **5 Repeated unauthorised absences**

- 5.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school to discuss the reasons. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 5.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action, possibly resulting in a fixed penalty fine, against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.
- 5.3 Persistent Absence is defined by the DfE as where a pupil's attendance is less than 90%. Particular attention is given to those pupils where absence is so low because of the impact this will have on them academically, socially and emotionally. The school will liaise with the Education Welfare Service for advice in such circumstances and typically one of their officers will contact families to support them to help ensure that attendance is improved.

#### **6 Lateness**

- 6.1 It is important that children arrive at school in good time so they make a settled start to the day and are ready to learn. Parents have an important responsibility to ensure that they help their children develop good habits and arrive at the school ready to line-up with their class.
- 6.2 All children that are late must go to the main entrance and be registered as late. Younger children will then be taken to their class. Parents should not take their children into class or go by any alternative route around the site for reasons of security.
- 6.3 The school will keep accurate records of those children that are late. Where there is a pattern of lateness, parents will be informed and if there is little or no improvement, invited to meet with the Family Worker or senior member of staff. If no improvements are made then this is referred to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service.

#### **7 Attendance targets**

- 7.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors as part of our annual target-setting process. The targets are challenging yet realistic,

and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## **8 Monitoring and review**

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the governing body to monitor overall attendance, and it requests regular updates in written reports every term from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they can be. Attendance at Chase Bridge is typically close to an average of 97% and it is expected pupils' attendance will be close to that unless there is some exceptional reason.
- 8.2 When analysing absence and attendance data, we correlate this with the child's emotional, social and academic performance in school and identify any areas of concern that may be connected. Please see our safeguarding policy (p8) ref specific safeguarding issues and children missing in education.
- 8.3 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 8.4 Class teachers have a shared responsibility for monitoring attendance in their class with administrative staff and the Family Worker, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Family Worker, who will contact the parents or carers.

# Appendices

## ATTENDANCE CODES

Codes used in official registers and shared with parents in end of year reports

# = partial or whole school closure  
(attendance not required)

# = not yet marked

/ = present

B = educated off site

C = other authorised circumstance

D = dual registration (attend elsewhere)

E = excluded (no alternative provision)

F = extended family holiday (agreed)

G = family holiday (NOT agreed)

H = family holiday (AGREED)

I = illness (not medical or dental)

J = interview

L = before registration closed

M = medical/dental appointment (authorised)

N = no reason yet provided for absence

O = unauthorised absence

P = approved sporting activity

R = religious observance (authorised)

S = study leave

T = traveller absence

U = late after register closed

V = educational visit or trip

W = work experience

X = non-compulsory school age

Y = unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Z = pupil not on roll

## Attendance and lateness – key information for parents - Did You Know ... ?

- Each year there are only 190 school days, this means that there are 175 days for shopping, birthday treats, non-urgent medical appointments, dental appointments and holidays etc
- If a child misses 16 days of school in a year then they are out of school more than they are in school!
- If a child misses a day a week for their entire school life it is the equivalent of missing 2 years of school.

### Impact of Poor Attendance

% Attendance	= % absence	= Days missed	= approx GCSE grades dropped	= weeks missed	= Years missed (over 5 years of education)
100%	0%	0	0	0	0
90%	10%	19	1	4	0.5
80%	20%	38	1-2	8	1
70%	30%	57	2-3	12	1.5
60%	40%	76	3-4	15	2
50%	50%	95	4-5	19	2.5

### Late Arrivals

- 5 minutes late = 3 days lost each year
- 10 minutes late = 6.5 days lost each year
- 15 minutes late = 10 days lost each year
- 20 minutes late = 13 days lost each year
- 30 minutes late = 19 days lost each year

## **Attendance and lateness – key information for parents**

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Our aims and objectives in relation to pupils' attendance are to:

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- ensure that pupils and their parents and carers understand the importance of regular and consistent attendance as well as ensuring that their children come to school on time;
- make clear to parents the consequences of failing to ensure that their children attend school;

### **If your child is absent ...**

If your child is ill and they need looking after at home then you should call the school and let the office know. When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence, and confirm its duration, even if the parent telephoned the school on the first day of absence.

### **If your child is late ...**

Children in the junior line up ready to go into class at 8.50am. Infant children begin at 8.55am. If your child is late then they should accompany you to the main school entrance and be registered by the office as late. Your child will then be taken to their class. Parents should not independently take their children to the classroom.

### **If there are problems with your child's attendance or lateness ...**

Parents will be invited to meet with the Family Worker, Headteacher or other senior member of staff if there are problems with attendance or lateness so that we can plan with you how improvements will be made. Where the problems are persistent then Educational Welfare Officers might also be involved.

### **Requests for leave of absence for a child ...**

It is important that children have very good attendance and arrive at school promptly ready to start classes on time. The school will not authorise absence for holidays, however, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances in which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child. Parents do not have a right to remove children and must seek permission from the headteacher. Each case will be considered individually by the headteacher or a member of staff with delegated authority.

**Please see our full policy on the school website for more detailed information:**

[www.chasebridge.richmond.sch.uk/](http://www.chasebridge.richmond.sch.uk/)