



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

September 2015

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Chadsgrove School

Aim of the Policy:

Chadsgrove School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a School, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. We do appreciate that some children will experience significant health issues and that these will be monitored closely.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents/Carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/Carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

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.

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.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) 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.

In deciding whether or not to grant the request for leave of absence the following should be taken into account;

- overall pattern of attendance;
- age of the child(ren)
- phase of education;
- time of the year and examinations;
- length, destination and purpose of the leave and whether it is likely to be a rare event in the life of the child;

- Family circumstances and the parents/carers reasons for wanting to take their annual holiday during term time.

It is up to the Head teacher to decide what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances'. In this context it shall mean significant emotional, educational, cultural and/or spiritual value to the child or children, which outweigh(s) the loss of teaching time. It will also take into account the Physical well being of the child as many children do have Complex Medical issues. It will be important to review each case individually and parents and carers who wish to request annual leave for 'exceptional circumstances' should apply in writing to the Head teacher.

A child's name can be removed from the register if the pupil has been granted a leave of absence and after absence:

- s/he has not returned by the agreed date;
- and s/he has continued to be absent for a further twenty school days;
- and the Headteacher is not satisfied that this is because s/he is ill or the absence is unavoidable.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice (parents/Carers must, from 1st September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days). If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will institute legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

The guidance in The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 will be followed with regard to deleting pupils from the Admission Register. The Education Welfare Service will be informed of every student deleted from the Admission Register.

If a pupil is deemed to be missing from education (CME), the guidelines issued by the Education Welfare Service will be followed. This can include a referral to the EWS for investigation.

Rights and Responsibilities

The School:

Chadsgrove School expects pupils to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn.

Chadsgrove School will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents/Carers as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

Chadsgrove School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.

Chadsgrove School will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.

Chadsgrove School will include in reports to parents/Carers on achievement, pupil's attendance at least annually.

The Pupils:

Pupils will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.

Pupils will attend all lessons punctually.

Pupils can expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.

Pupils will be listened to and respected.

Pupils will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school.

The Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends school, properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.

Parents/Carers are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call before 9.30 am on the first morning of any absence.

If attendance problems develop, the school expects parents/Carers to work actively with school staff and the Education Welfare Service, to solve them.

Parents/carers can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

Registration

Types of Registration and General Register Maintenance

At Chadsgrove School a manual registration system is used.

Manual registers must be marked in ink and where an alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change.

Registers will be returned to the school office at the end of the registration period for safety and will be secured but accessible in case of an emergency.

All notes from parents/carers regarding a pupil's absence will be stored on the pupil's file and retained for three years.

Start and Close of Registration

Class Teachers will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each day.

Registration begins at 9.00am and closes at 9.30am.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they should report to the office to be entered into the late record book.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

Use of Symbols

The following symbols are used in registers:

Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Educated off site
C	Other Authorised Circumstances
E	Excluded
F	Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
G	Family Holiday (not agreed). Unauthorised
H	Family Holiday (agreed). Authorised
I	Illness
L	Late (After 9.30/1.45)
M	Medical, Dentist, Hospital
N	No reason Yet Given
O	Unauthorised not covered by other codes
P	Approved sporting activities
R	Religious Observation
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late after Registration closes.
V	Educational Visit or Trip.
Y	Enforced Closure
Z	Pupils not yet on Roll
#	School Closed to Pupils

The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents/Carers for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion of the academic year. The information will be kept on Simms and registers centrally achieved.

Staff Responsible for Processes

The Headteacher is responsible for attendance issues and will ensure that registers are checked on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The Headteacher will liaise regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.

The administrative team are responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.

The class teacher/adult in charge is responsible for taking the register daily each morning for morning and afternoon sessions.

The class teacher/adult in charge is responsible for register maintenance of their class register. Including the following:

- ◆ using the correct colour ink (red)
- ◆ ensuring that symbols used are appropriate (/ , \, or 0)
- ◆ not using correction fluid
- ◆ ensuring all mistakes are amended with the original information still clear and corrections clearly marked
- ◆ ensuring the registers are neatly kept allowing for ease of reading at all times but especially in an emergency situation – i.e. during a fire procedure

Chadsgrove School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations.

Each pupil should be observed or called by name when the register is being taken.

Medical Illness

When children are ill for extended periods of time regular contact will be made with the parent/carer. This will be done on a weekly basis to ensure support and guidance is offered by the school. When school feel they need more reassurance on the illness then medical professionals will be contacted. Staff from school will be visited by a member of the school team.

Procedures for Following up Absence/Lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made then Chadsgrove School will.

- Contact the parent/carer by telephone, or if the parent/carer is unobtainable;
- Write a letter requesting information

If the above actions do not elicit an explanation for the absence and the absence continues, a further letter will be sent to the parents/carers.

If this letter does not elicit an explanation for the absence a second letter will be sent to the parent/carer, the school's Education Welfare Officer will be informed and the parent/Carer may be invited in to the school for a meeting with the Headteacher. This meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved at this meeting then a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer, and a formal intervention planned.

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include members of school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Where a pupil is persistently late with no obvious reason the school will write to the parent/carer inviting them to a school based meeting.

Escorts can provide 'extra eyes and ears' in monitoring pupils' well-being and can support the promotion of attendance consider how transport staff could support the promotion of regular attendance.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

PARENTS MAY NOT AUTHORISE ABSENCE, ONLY SCHOOLS CAN DO THIS.

Worcestershire CC advises that leave of absence will only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances. This may include;

- ◆ An immediate family member is critically/terminally ill
- ◆ Families who have been through a traumatic event
- ◆ Families where a parent/carer is able to demonstrate clearly (e.g. a letter from an employer which can be verified) that they are restricted to all annual leave within school term time.
- ◆ Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- ◆ Days of religious observance
- ◆ Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- ◆ Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance

Absence will be recorded as when due to:

- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Haircuts
- ◆ Missed bus
- ◆ Slept late
- ◆ No uniform
- ◆ Looking after brothers or sisters or unwell parents
- ◆ Minding the house
- ◆ Birthdays
- ◆ Holidays

It may be necessary for the school or Education Welfare Officer to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- ◆ Appointment cards/letters
- ◆ Medical certificate
- ◆ Letter from GP

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Education Welfare Officer may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

Female Genital Mutilation

What we will do?

When we have a concern about a child and they are not in school we will contact Children's Social Care Services. If the concerns are based on more concrete indicators – i.e., the young person says this is going to happen to them, or disclosure that it has happened to them or to an older sister – we will make a child protection referral.

We will not:

- contact the parents before seeking advice from children's social care;
- Make any attempt to mediate between the child/young person and parents.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

In the belief that pupils are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs the curriculum will be regularly reviewed.

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Expectations are made clear to parents/carers with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement and School prospectus.

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parent/carers' evenings and pupil reports will be used.

Parents/carers pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Pupils with a known attendance problem being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents/carers and will be set targets for improvement.

Parents/carers will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

This policy will be reviewed to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.

Signed

_____ **Date**_____

Chair of Governors

_____ **Date**_____

Guidance Notes for Parents/Carers requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents/Carers wishing the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send to the Headteacher the tear off request form below. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents/Carers are strongly advised not to finalise any holiday booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision on their request. In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the departure date to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
2. The granting of leave of absence in school term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the school. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) policy is that family holidays should not be taken in school term time. Where such requests are made, for the leave to be granted, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances**.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents/Carers need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
 - the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
 - the age of the child;
 - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
 - the overall attendance pattern of the child;
 - the nature of the trip.
 - students/pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
4. Where parents/carers have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents/carers will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.
5. Where requests for a grant of leave of absence are received from only one parent/carer the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents/carers where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all 'parents/carers' are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent/carer will receive a penalty notice.

6. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence but, the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost.**
7. Should the School decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child. If not paid within 21 days this fine increases to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.

Absence in Term Time

Pupil does not return procedure

**Contact from
Parent/Carer to say
return is delayed**

Pupil has returned to UK

- Normal procedures for non attendance apply.
- Register absence as authorised if sickness or unavoidable cause is established. In all other cases register absence as unauthorised.
- School to complete EIS Referral (EISR) to request Penalty Notice if criteria met.

Pupil has not returned to UK

- Register absence as unauthorised or 'O' irrespective of reasons provided for the delay
- The pupil can be removed from roll 20 days after letter 1 (appendix 7).
- If this action is taken school should inform the Children Missing Education Officer & Admission Team.
- School send letter 2 (appendix 8) to the home address.
- School should then delete child from the register and transfer pupil information to the Lost Pupil Database via the s2s website.

**NO Contact from
Parent/Carer to
say return is
delayed**

Absence has been authorised

- Absence has been authorised and pupil does not return on the agreed date.
- School send letter 1 (appendix 7) to home or agreed contact address.
- Any further absences should be recorded as unauthorised unless parent/carers informs school of the reason for the delayed return. Absences then recorded appropriately. This could be illness or disrupted travel arrangements. Appropriate attendance code should be used.

Pupil to be deleted from the school register.

- School and LA should make enquires to locate the pupil.
- If the pupil fails to return to school within 20 days of the agreed return date school may delete the child from the register.
- School must notify EIS before doing so
- If after making enquiries school are unable to contact parent/carers or have any concerns about pupil's welfare they should contact EIS for support.
- School can then delete child from the register and transfer pupil information to the Lost Pupil Database via the s2s website.