



Chapel-en-le-Frith
High School

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Approved By Governors: Learning and Pastoral Committee November 2017 Minute 12 (a)
Approved by Full Governors: December 2017 Minute 6 (e)

1.0 Attendance

1.1 Key requirements

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education as stated in section 576 of The Education Act 1996. Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable full-time education. As a last resort schools and local authorities have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

The school seeks to operate in ways which maximise student potential while supporting parents in meeting their legal requirements.

The school fulfils its responsibilities by taking registers at every lesson using MINT Class, of being open for the required 190 student school days (unless prevented by extreme weather or other unforeseen exceptional circumstance), and by using the nationally recognised attendance codes.

1.2 Aims of the policy

- To maintain overall school attendance at 96% or above
- To raise the profile of the importance of high level attendance among students, parents and other staff
- To outline a procedure for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies
- To eradicate persistent absence and lateness

1.3 Authorised and unauthorised absences

If a student is absent from the school, it is vital that a parent contacts the school at the earliest opportunity to provide a sufficient reason for absence. This should be by telephone using our dedicated absence line 01298 811878 and leave a message or telephone 01298 813118 after 8am if you wish to speak to a member of staff, or email: attendance@chapelhigh.org.uk

Absence can only be authorised where there is particularly good cause. If no sufficient reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised. Medical evidence will need to be provided whenever it is available. This can be in the form of an appointment card, doctor's note or a copy of a prescription.

Parents cannot authorise absence. This decision rests with the school in accordance within the boundaries set by The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996. Where deemed necessary the school reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness.

1.4 Leave of absences and appointments during term time

In order to maximise individual achievement parents should avoid making routine appointments for students during the school day or taking family holidays during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 that came into effect on 1st September 2013 make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If parents want to request a leave of absence during term time for **any absence consisting of one day or more** they will need to submit a completed **request for absence form** (See Appendices). This is found on the school website or can be obtained from school reception. Medical appointments that cannot be made outside of term time or school hours and will not require a full day's absence do not need a **request for absence form** but a note from a parent/carer will be required. The school will only consider authorising an absence during term time based on individual need and exceptional circumstance and only where the following criteria have been met:

- an application is made to the Headteacher in advance of the absence (at least 2 weeks) by a parent or carer the student lives with
- there are special and/or exceptional reasons for needing to take the child out of school.

The Headteacher will consider each application individually, however parents should be aware that circumstances such as not being able to get leave from work, or to attend a family wedding, would not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances. It is entirely the school's decision and not a parental right to authorise absence from school. Parents should be advised that absence without the consent of the school could result in further action and sanctions including a penalty notice.

Parents will be notified of the Headteacher's decision by letter (see Appendices)

1.5 Truancy

If a student is found to be truanting a lesson within the school site or off school site then they will be disciplined in line with the school's behaviour policy. This policy can be found on the school website.

Where a student is missing from school and off site, it may be appropriate for the school to contact the police.

1.6 Legal action

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a legal requirement. If a child of compulsory school age does not attend regularly and no alternative provision has been put in place, parents can be subject to penalty fine or prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices can be issued for any of the following reasons:

- Irregular school attendance (persistent intermittent attendance)
- Unauthorised absence during term time
- Overt truancy
- Being in a public place during first five days of an exclusion

If the school feel it necessary, then cases will be referred to the Multi Agency Team and Education Welfare Service who will issue and administrate the Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Legal action includes:

Penalty Notice: A penalty notice may be issued to a parent for failing to ensure their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or no alternative provision is put in place. Penalty notices can be put in place where the student's absences are not authorised by the school. This includes holidays during term time. Penalty notices are issued at the Headteacher's discretion. The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the

notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 42 day period, a prosecution will be sought. (The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013).

Prosecution for unauthorised absence: It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

1.7 Supporting and working with parents

In order to support parents/carers in meeting their legal requirements and to maximise individual student attendance, the school seeks to keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and to actively involve parents on attendance issues. Methods include:

- Active follow up if a student is absent and no reason given via text messages or phone calls
- Unexplained/unaccounted for absence letter asking for reasons
- Notification letters when attendance falls below 96%
- Discussion at Parents' Evenings
- Parental meetings
- Home visits
- Active involvement of Pastoral Secretary, Pastoral Leader, Multi Agency Team and the Assistant Headteacher
- Attendance Panel Meetings – Action points agreed
- Attendance Focus Group – Individual Attendance Plans agreed + Parenting Contracts signed

2.0 Punctuality

2.1 Morning registration

Morning registration starts at 8.40am and students are advised to be in school by 8.30am to enable them to be in their tutor rooms at this time. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are registered in school for morning and afternoon registration as well as at the start of each lesson. A student who does not register is assumed to be absent from school and parents will be contacted.

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school on a punctual basis.

If students are late for school, then they will sign in with a member of office staff at the main reception and then make their way to their tutor room.

2.2 Late detentions

If a student is late twice in a week they are issued with a 30 minute lunchtime detention by their Pastoral Leader (students will be advised to bring a packed lunch). If they are late on 3 or more occasions they will receive an hour's detention after school. If a student chooses not to attend the after school detention then they are placed in a Leadership Group Detention and a possible Internal Exclusion for persistent offenders.

If there has been a traffic incident or school buses are late, students will not be issued with a late mark.

If a student is late due to a medical or dental appointment, parents will need to inform the school either by telephone, email, or note from home. Without such confirmation the absence will be unauthorised.

Where patterns of poor punctuality are emerging, parents will be contacted by their child's Pastoral Leader. Students will also be placed on report in order to monitor punctuality to lessons.

3.0 Monitoring absences

3.1 Role of the Tutor

Every half term the Pastoral Secretary will provide Pastoral Leaders and tutors with the previous half term's attendance and lates data for their House and tutor group. The attendance board will be updated with this data and the tutor group with the top attendance for the half term will be identified and rewarded.

Attendance will be recorded on all progress reports that go home to parents.

Regular attendance at school is extremely important and is the responsibility of students, parents and all staff to ensure that students attend school as regularly as possible. When a child returns from an absence, form tutors will have a conversation with the student about the importance of excellent attendance and inform the Pastoral Leader of any concerns.

3.2 Role of the Pastoral Leaders

Attendance across all four Houses is a priority for all Pastoral Leaders and the Pastoral Secretary will highlight to them any student in their House falling below the school's target of 96% attendance. This will trigger a phone call to parents from the Pastoral Leader to help to proactively deal with any underlying concerns or to have reassurances that the absences have been unavoidable.

If attendance falls below 96%, the procedures outlined in 3.4 will be activated.

3.3 Role of the Governing Body

The Governing body will approve the annual school attendance target and review regularly annual attendance reports.

3.4 Whole school procedures (Flow Chart – See Appendices)

If a student's attendance falls below 96% and they are absent on 3 or more occasions this will trigger letter 1: Importance of attendance above 96%

If a student's attendance falls below 96% and they are absent on 5 or more occasions this will trigger letter 2: Inviting parents into school for a meeting with the Pastoral Leader to discuss their child's attendance.

Failure to attend the meeting in school will trigger letter 3: Revised appointment time given with parents being informed that school has the option of a home visit or Multi Agency Team referral if a meeting cannot be agreed.

If a student's attendance falls below 96% and they are absent on 7 or more occasions this will trigger letter 4: Inviting parents into school for an Attendance Panel meeting with the child's Pastoral Leader and a member of the Multi Agency Team. This is a formal meeting where notes are taken and an Attendance Action Plan drawn up.

If a student's attendance falls below 90% at any point through the year, this will trigger letter 5: Serious cause for concern. This will automatically invite parents into an Attendance Panel meeting with the child's Pastoral Leader and a member of the Multi Agency Team. This is a formal meeting where notes are taken and an Attendance Action Plan drawn up.

Failure to attend the Attendance Panel meeting will trigger letter 6: This is a formal letter offering a revised appointment time and informing parents that the school will be referring the case to the Multi Agency Team if there is no response from home and a meeting time cannot be agreed.

All students who attend an Attendance Panel meeting will have an individual action plan to help raise their levels of attendance in school. Students who still fail to improve their levels of attendance will join an Attendance Focus Group and be monitored on a more regular basis. This group is designed to tackle persistent short-term absences and to change behaviour before it becomes habit. This may include group discussion and exercises. As part of this group students will have an Individual Attendance Plan drawn up and parents will be asked to sign a **Parenting Contract**.

3.5 Attendance Panel Meeting

After the Attendance Panel meeting, if attendance has not improved to an acceptable level after three weeks, then a Parenting Contract Meeting is set up with the parents, student, Pastoral Leader, MAT team and Assistant Headteacher.

The Pastoral Secretary will arrange the meeting over the phone and send a follow up letter confirming the date and time. The meeting will follow the format of the Parenting Contract documentation (see Appendices) and will address all questions on the Parenting Contract form. At the end of the meeting the parent should sign the Parenting Contract agreeing to ensure the regular attendance of their child for the next three weeks. Any refusal to do this must be recorded. A Parenting Contract Review is then booked for three weeks' time. The student's attendance will be monitored for those three weeks.

If at the Parenting Contract review, attendance has improved to an acceptable level; the case is closed and a letter sent. If attendance has not improved, then the school will need to decide whether to monitor the student's attendance for a further three weeks, and then hold a final Parenting Contact Meeting review, or to refer on to the MAT team's Education Welfare Service (EWS) to carry out a pre-court interview with parents or issue a penalty notice.

If at any point during the Parenting Contact Meeting process parents appear to disengage i.e. do not attend meetings or are unwilling to rearrange meetings; the case can be referred to the

MAT team (EWS). If parents then engage with the EWS, the case may be sent back to the school to process.

4.0 Data

4.1 Data Monitoring Systems

Data from SIMS and MINT Class will be monitored on a half-termly basis and will provide:

- Whose attendance/punctuality has improved compared to the last half term
- Whose attendance/punctuality has fallen compared to the last half term
- Who has achieved 100% attendance for the last half term
- Who has achieved 99 – 96% attendance for the last half term.
- Data for individual students, tutor groups and targeted groups is analysed to identify patterns which cause concern.
- Clear trigger points for higher levels of intervention are applied.
- Attendance panels are organised for students causing significant concern in conjunction with our MAT team and Education Welfare Officer and action plans are agreed for those students and parents.
- The School Attendance Plan is reviewed annually and updated every year and copies lodged with the Education Welfare Service and the LA.
- Persistent absence cases are identified and targeted to increase students' attendance levels.
- Unauthorised absence cases, which may result in the application of the Fixed Penalty Process, are referred to the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral.

If attendance is below 96% and shows no signs of improvement, Pastoral Leaders will have regular discussions with the students and may identify need for further support and intervention.

4.2 Use of Attendance Data

- Attendance targets for the school are set annually and communicated to the LA.
- Attendance figures are reported to the LA every term and DFE as required.
- Attendance data is monitored by the Pastoral Secretary and the Pastoral Leader having overall responsibility for monitoring attendance within their individual House.
- Data is analysed to inform the effectiveness of interventions, to help to identify patterns of absence, to correlate attendance with achievement and to monitor policy/practice.

5.0 Promoting Attendance

5.1 Promotion of good attendance/punctuality

The importance of regular attendance is communicated to parents/carers and students via the prospectus, the home-school agreement, our Attendance Postcard, the annual Parent Information Booklet, Newsletters, the Attendance display board and letters/postcards sent home.

5.2 Celebration of good attendance

Good attendance is rewarded through the school's merit system and Praise Postcards are sent home every term for 100% attendance. Students who achieve 100% each term are presented with a certificate in assembly.

Tutor Groups with the best attendance are recognised and promoted by certificates and recognition on the display board.

6.0 Supporting good attendance

6.1 Support Systems

- Students who are absent because of illness for any extended period of time will have work sent home to them and will be given support by their teachers to catch up on learning.
- The Student Support Centre will work closely with the Pastoral team and parents to facilitate an early return to school or support a reintegration package by accommodating and supporting students who are suffering from long-term illnesses or injuries, those exhibiting short or long-term attendance difficulties.
- Multi-agency partnership work is undertaken for vulnerable pupils with poor attendance.
- Where parenting is thought to be a contributory factor to deteriorating attendance levels the Pastoral team in conjunction with the Multi Agency Team may consider the use of parenting contracts.

6.2 Transition

Where attendance is a cause for concern, it will be identified through transition visits to feeder primaries, communicated to school staff and support systems will be put into place to support the transition from Key Stage 2 – 3.

APPENDICES

Request for Absence Form

Headteacher response letters to request for absences

- Letter a: Leave Authorised
- Letter b: Leave request denied (Unauthorised)
- Letter c: Leave Unauthorised – late application
- Letter d: Challenge absence – no reason given, believed holiday
- Letter e: Challenge reason for absence – false reason given

Request for Penalty Notice

Attendance Monitoring Flow Chart

Attendance Monitoring letters

- Letter 1: Below 96% x 3 occasions
- Letter 2: Below 96% x 5 occasions – Invite to meeting with the Pastoral Leader.
- Letter 3: Failure to attend school meeting
- Letter 4: Below 96% x 7 or more occasions - Invite to Attendance Panel (formal)
- Letter 5: Below 90% - Invite to Attendance Panel (formal)
- Letter 6: Failure to attend Attendance Panel meeting.

Student Attendance Meeting Proforma

Parenting Contract Meeting

- Parenting Contract Meeting Proforma
- Parenting Contract to sign