



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date:

Headteacher Signature:

Chair of Governors Signature

October 2019

Introduction

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Chantry Community Primary School by

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is vital to ensure that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ***absences which are not for exceptional circumstances***
- ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Registers are taken at 8.45am, any children arriving after this time should enter school via the main entrance and be signed into the 'late book'. If children are regularly late this will be discussed with the parent/carer by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Parents/carers are requested to contact the school by 9.30am if their child is not going to be in school that day, stating the reason for the absence. If no contact is made by the parents and the school is unaware of the child's absence the office staff will try and make contact with the parents to establish a reason for the absence.

If a child has a medical appointment in school time that cannot be avoided, a copy of the appointment letter is required to go in the register. The school is happy to make a copy of the original letter on your behalf.

Absence forms should be completed by parents/carers for planned absences i.e. holidays or other exceptional circumstances, giving the school at least 14 days notice, and an appointment made with the Headteacher to discuss the absence.

The school will not authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. immediate family bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

The school has adopted the following attendance target

97% Attendance Target

Parents of children whose attendance drops below 95% will receive an amber warning letter. If attendance drops below 90% a red warning letter will be sent requesting a meeting with the parent/Carer and an attendance plan put in place. These letters are sent out at the end

of each double term. Regular lateness will be followed up by the Headteacher.

To encourage good attendance we have set up a reward system. Any child who has 100% attendance at the end of each term receives a 'treat event'. Those children who have 100% for the entire school year will also be invited to an additional event at the end of the school year. In addition Parents of children who have 98% attendance will receive 1 raffle ticket, those with 99% 2 raffle tickets and those with 100% 3 raffle tickets which are entered into a draw at the end of each term and the winning family receive a £50 Tesco Voucher.

Chantry Community Primary School is working on improving the attendance of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals as these children's attendance is less than those not entitled to Free School Meals.

Term Time Holidays

Term time holidays are not authorised by the school unless there are exceptional circumstances e.g. the death of a parent. The application must be made in advance and where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. Parents taking children on unauthorised holidays during term time could face a fine.

Children Missing Education (CME)

If we suspect a child is 'missing' where there are already child protection concerns, the school will inform the relevant social service duty team immediately, as well as the Children Missing Education Officer.

For pupils that have left our school completely and where we have been unable to establish the educational provision that the pupil is attending, or where a pupil has been missing for 20 school days or more, we will complete an online CME Referral Form.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.