

CHANDAG INFANT SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2017

Review Date: September 2019



Introduction

CHANDAG INFANT SCHOOL is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. You can view the latest guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Full attendance, that is students attending every time that the school is open to them, is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our students. Our school will actively promote and encourage excellent attendance for all our students. Our expectation is that students will have 100% attendance, unless prevented from attending school due to illness or any unavoidable circumstances.

Persistent absenteeism is classed as below 90% attendance in line with government policy

School's roles and responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) at Chandag Infant School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers.

The register will be taken promptly at 9 am and 1.15pm. Any child arriving up to 15 minutes after the register has been taken, will be marked as Late with an 'L' code. **The Register closes at 9.15 am and 1.35pm;** any child arriving after this period will be marked as having an **unauthorised absence with a 'U' code.**

Categorising absence

- A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked with an unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate.
- Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.
- Chandag Infant School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. For this reason, all messages relating to absence or returning from absence should be given either over the phone or in person, to the School Office. Messages should not be given verbally to class teachers.
- If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher may invite parents to a meeting in order to discuss the reasons for their child's absence and will encourage parents to keep absences to a minimum. If absences persist, this may be followed up with a letter, stipulating that no further absences will be authorised unless medical evidence can be provided.
- The school nurse and Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO) will be contacted for instances where there is regular illness in order to provide support for the child.
- A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

It is the parent/carers responsibility to notify school of any absences and to provide a reason promptly. If no reason is provided, a letter may be sent to parents/ carers to remind them and to ask for a response within 1 week. If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **after 1 week**, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised;

Authorisation of absences are at the Head teacher's discretion and will be decided on an individual basis.

Collection and analysis of data

The Headteacher and School Business Manager will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored on a termly basis with the Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO) by individual, year group and by reasons for absence.

Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a high profile at Chandag Infant School. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

Chandag Infant School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The school office will contact the families for those children considered to be at risk from poor attendance on the day for an explanation of absence and refer to the Headteacher. Any absence on the first day after a holiday will be followed up with a phone call from the school.

First-day calling

Chandag Infant School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence if not heard from a parent by 9.30 am. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will make contact with parents and invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

Referral to the Children Missing Education Service(CMES)

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the CMES. The school has regular meetings with the CMEO every term.

Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Children Missing Education Officer

Pupils who arrive late for school - but before the register closes must report to the school office and will be recorded in the "Late Book". They will then be marked as late.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late or after registration has closed should therefore report to the school office. Children arriving late will be marked as coming to school in the late book. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return. For insurance purposes, children returning to school after the lunch hour should not arrive before 1.15pm.

Term-time Holidays

Term-time holidays will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances in line with the KAFOS and Chandag Infant School Guidance.

Chandag Infant School will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Since Summer 2013, the Government has directed that time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix), with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday. Chandag Infant School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence. Chandag Infant School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests in May and June.

Where a request for leave of absence has been made by one parent and the child's parents are separated, any additional parent with parental responsibility¹ will be advised of the request for leave. The school will not become involved in disputes between parents over permissions surrounding the request. If the parent on receipt of the notification does not agree with the absence then he/she may put in writing to the headteacher notification to that effect. This will be given consideration should a Penalty Notice be requested for the absence.

¹ Except where there has been an order made by a court restricting the sharing of information with that parent. In such cases it is the responsibility of the parent to provide documentary evidence of the order.

Unauthorised Holidays

If it becomes apparent that a holiday has been taken following a decision by the school not to authorise the holiday or without consulting the school, the parent will be invited to meet with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher on their return. A warning letter may be given at this meeting and the school may request a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Chandag Infant School.

Chandag Infant School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Chandag Infant School on the first day of absence by 9.30am, using the schools absence telephone line (0117 9864129 option 1) or by reporting in person to the school office.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives.

Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

9.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

10. Conclusion

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Children Missing Education Officer

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school by 9 a.m. but not before 8:45 a.m. to be ready to go into class at 8:50am. The register is taken at 9am. Afternoon register is taken at 1:15 p.m.

Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on each day of absence unless otherwise agreed with the School Administrator. If the school does not receive a daily update, they will make an attempt to contact you by telephone. If there is no reply or call returned by 10am, the school may make a home visit to check on the child's welfare.

On return to school, a letter, phone call or personal message explaining the absence is expected. **Please ensure that this is communicated directly to the school office.**

If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the Children Missing Education Officer.

Flow Chart for absence management

