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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Chadlington CE Primary School

*Date: 5th October 2021*

*Next review date: 5th October 2022*



### **Introduction:**

This is a successful school and we all play our part in making it so. We aim to:

1. Provide every child with the opportunity to explore and celebrate their unique potential and to develop their imagination, creativity and self-belief;
2. Enable pupils to thrive as life-long learners; developing the confidence, resilience and drive that they need to reach their goals;
3. Encourage pupils to embrace opportunities so that they will go on to lead a fulfilling and rewarding life, guided by Christian values;
4. Encourage children to develop a sense of responsibility as active global citizens; caring for others, valuing unity and respecting different attitudes and beliefs.

If pupils are to receive the support that they need to achieve the school's long term aims, it is vital that they attend regularly. Every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. In most cases, if the school is forced to close, remote learning will be put in place and children will be expected to participate in regular online lessons.

It is very important therefore that children attend regularly and arrive at school punctually. This policy sets out how we can achieve good levels of attendance.

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning, reducing future life opportunities. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of their parents or guardians and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Share details on attendance in our newsletter;
- Report to parents/guardians regularly on how their child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by sharing individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance.
- Offer support to children who find coming into school difficult.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be 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, parents and guardians should never 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 usually makes things worse. The School can offer support to children who are reluctant to come into School and will support families in this position and the school's Family Support Worker will work in partnership with families to address any problems.

### **Parents can support their child by:**

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with school
- Being positive about school (even if their own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging their child to invite friends home for play dates

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and parents or guardians will be informed of this immediately.

All of our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan, which may include: allocation of additional support from a teaching assistant or the Family Support Worker, use of circle time and individual incentive programmes. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If a child becomes a PA pupil, we may seek the support of their parents or guardians to complete an Early Help Assessment and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

## **Absence Procedures:**

### **If a child is absent parents or guardians must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence, if a Persistent Absentee Action Plan is in place (this must be done even if parents or guardians have already telephoned us);
- Or, parents and guardians can call into school and report to reception.

### **If a child is absent the school will:**

- Telephone or text parents or guardians on the first day of absence if the school has not heard from them;
- Invite parents/guardians in to discuss the situation with the Class Teacher.
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90% and is not improving.

## **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers at the beginning of each year.

## **The County Attendance Team:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any attendance problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority.

“If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.”

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 [attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they will

miss important work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The doors open and early work begins at **8:45 a.m.** and provides pupils with the opportunities they need to practise basic skills.

The school day starts at **8.55 a.m.** when the register is taken. We expect all children to be in class by that time.

At **9.10 a.m.** the register will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If a child has a persistent late record, their parents/guardians will be asked to meet with the Class Teacher to resolve the problem. Parents/guardians can approach the school at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time.

### **Exceptional Leave:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

- The link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
- Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
- All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
- The Head Teacher will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
- Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a student's attendance is less than 95%.
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.

- Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
- Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

## **School Targets and Initiatives**

The school has targets to improve attendance and all children have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school are displayed in the school at the main entrance and parents are informed in the newsletter.

The school's attendance target is currently 97%. The school monitors absences and punctuality each half term to identify where improvements need to be made. Teachers will update parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher Consultation Evenings about the school's progress towards achieving its attendance target and how their child's attendance compares.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Parents** are responsible for talking to their children about the importance of good attendance and ensuring that their children attend school regularly and promptly. They should notify the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence and before 9:30 a.m. on each subsequent day. If asked to do so, they should provide evidence supporting periods of absence (e.g. medical notes, appointment cards etc.).

**The Class Teachers** are responsible for monitoring the attendance of pupils in their class, liaising with families, implementing and delivering agreed action plans for persistent absentees, seeking support from the Family Support worker, where appropriate and informing the Headteacher of any concerns.

**The Family Support Worker** may be asked to support families with attendance when an Early Help Assessment has been carried out and a TAF has been put in place.

**The Headteacher** is responsible for monitoring attendance across the school and seeking further support from Oxfordshire LA in cases where situations are not improving, despite agreed action plans being put in place. The Headteacher will refer pupils to the LA Attendance Team when this is appropriate.

**Governors** will review the Attendance Policy annually and monitor progress towards achieving the school's attendance target.

## **Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its Attendance Policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

(Reviewed October 5th, 2021)