



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Attendance Co-ordinator: Elizabeth Dockry

Education Welfare Officer: Gail Isherwood

Attendance Policy Group members: Curriculum Committee

Name	Role	Responsibility
G Hamilton	Head teacher	Implementation of this policy at the school Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
E Dockry	Attendance coordinator	Leading attendance across the school Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes Having an oversight of data analysis Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
B Sleeman	Chair of Governors	Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy Attendance will be discussed as part of the safeguarding committee meetings each term and measures and steps that have been taken to promote good attendance will be under constant review
Gail Isherwood	EWO	To support the school in achieving its objectives by following the Local Authority Guidelines.



Attendance Policy Statement:

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents/carers, local community and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Aims:

- To improve the quality of school life
- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

Targets:

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information.
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the EWO.
- To discuss the settings of targets for the school with the Education Welfare Officer and the School Improvement partner.
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and ensure that these are communicated to all relevant parties.
- To keep parents/carers, pupils and governors informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children.



Objectives:

- To involve the children more in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parents/carers about regular school attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children's attendance
- To recognise the important role of the class teacher in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the aims and objectives to be met
- To maintain effective working relationships with the Education Welfare Service, and report half-termly figures to the service

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Parents/carers will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- When their children first start at our school
- Through Home-School contracts
- Through newsletters
- At parents/carers evenings
- In the school brochure
- In the annual Governors' Report to Parents/Carers.

Children will be advised of our policy on attendance:

- In assemblies
- In the classroom
- During appropriate areas of the curriculum



Procedure:

- Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
 - - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- Parents/carers must provide an explanation if the child is absent. If the absence is due to illness or some other unforeseeable event then the parent/carer should telephone the school absence line to leave a message before 9am on the first day of absence and on every subsequent day of absence. If the absence is pre-arranged, then the parent/carer should complete a Leave of Absence request form in advance of the proposed absence and submit this to the school office.
- If contact explaining the child's absence fails to be made by parents/carers, then the school will contact the home by telephone/text on the initial day, following this with a letter after 3 days of unexplained absence. **This contact needs to be recorded in the register.**
- The head teacher regularly reminds parents/carers of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Children with 100% attendance are rewarded by the school.
- The school will celebrate achievements when an improvement in attendance can be seen

Identification & Referral:

- Identification is made by the class teacher (cause for concern)
- Concerns are communicated to the parent(s)/carer(s) by the class teacher, using our attendance rating chart.
- Person responsible (class teacher) will contact parent(s)/carer(s) with a letter.
- Following the letter, there will be four weeks' monitoring of the child's attendance.
- If there is no improvement, at this point, attendance a further letter may be sent and parent(s)/carer(s) can be invited in for a meeting.
- Parent(s)/carer(s) may, after four weeks' monitoring, be informed that a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made.
- Parental duty to ensure full school attendance should be reinforced
- If attendance has improved over the last four weeks, monitoring of attendance may continue.
- At this point, a referral to the Education Welfare Service should be made, if attendance has not improved and a final warning letter may be appropriate at this point
- The referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s) and a print out of the child's attendance certificate.

Completing the Register:

- The twice-daily requirement to register pupils can and should be perceived as an opportunity for the school to receive children formally from home, and serve as an introduction to the session
- The marking of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost
- However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- Registers are marked electronically and any alterations dated and explained.



- All absences should be accounted for and coded
- The register should be marked using the codes advised by the DfE and Cheshire East Council (as set out in the Appendix to this policy).
- Due to the use of an electronic marking system, the Governing Body is responsible for registering with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998
- Electronic registers have to be printed out once a month and kept in the same way as manual registers. **These are legal documents**

Lateness:

School doors open at 8.45 and **all pupils are expected to be in school by 8.55 for registration.** Children are **late** if they arrive after 8.55. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence:

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off situations (once in a life time events). If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargee (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Visits to prospective new schools
- External exams or educational assessments
- Approved sporting, cultural or competitive activity

Attendance Support

The school buys into the Cheshire East attendance support service who help assist with:

- Monitoring, analysing and advising on attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Feeding back on attendance reports to school staff and discussing concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices



Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Monitor attendance of individual pupils where class teachers have recognised a pattern of absence or a substantial amount of time off in comparison to their peers
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

Family Holidays during term time:

Parents/carers are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. School holiday dates are published well in advance of each school year. **Parents/carers do not have the right to take their child or young person out of school for such a holiday** and such an absence will be recorded as unauthorised except in exceptional circumstances. In all such cases a request for absence form should be completed. Please refer to the school's Leave of Absence Policy for further details.



In developing this Attendance Policy we have taken into account the fact that Cheshire is an ethnically diverse community. The school has incorporated practice, which guards against disadvantaging any sections of the community. The school is aware and takes into account the need for all public authorities to re-examine and make any necessary changes to their practice in promoting genuine multi-racial partnership.

The school understands the need for on-going communication with parents/carers and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.

Policy reviewed March 2024

Next review March 2025

Chair of Governors: Mr Ben Sleeman
Headteacher: Mr Graham Hamilton



APPENDIX 1

DfE Registration Codes

Code	Description
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site – e.g. College
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday
G	Family holiday not agreed
H	Holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registration closed)
M	Medical/dental appointment or sickness absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Travellers absence
U	Late after registration closed
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age or COVID-19 related
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances



APPENDIX 1

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

We know that you as parents/carers want the best for your child and that having a good education helps to open up more opportunities in adult life. Bearing this in mind, we would like to ensure that you are aware of the law relating to holidays taken during term time.

As parents you have a legal duty to ensure that your children attend school on a regular basis. The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to “*fail to secure their child’s regular attendance at the school*”. The amendments to the 2006 Regulations remove any reference to *family holidays, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days*.

The amendments also make it very clear that **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The amendments give parents **no entitlement** to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time and require the Head Teacher and Governing Body to determine what the exceptional circumstances are. The decision will be made by the Head Teacher and/or Governors. They will use their discretion to consider each request individually.

A Leave of Absence form must be completed in advance and returned to the school. These forms can be requested from the School Office and, on completion, should be handed back to the School Office, so that a reply can be given. Alternatively the forms are available from the School’s website. Email requests must be sent for the attention of the Head Teacher.

You must clearly state on the form what the exceptional circumstance is that requires the leave of absence to be taken in term time.

On receipt of the request, you will be sent a response indicating whether the school is able to authorise the leave of absence or not.

If parents, in the circumstance where the absence has not been authorised, still decide to take their child out of school for a leave of absence then the absence will be coded as **unauthorised**. This may lead to the school referring the matter to the Local Authority, which can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
Paid between 21 and 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
Paid after 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child’s regular attendance	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates’ Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children’s regular attendance