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# Attendance Policy

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Chew Valley School

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## **Chew Valley School Attendance Policy**

### **1. Rationale**

Excellent attendance is essential to enable full realisation of potential by students and to ensure their readiness for the world of work. We aim to promote full attendance by building a strong partnership with parents and carers.

This policy falls in line with the statutory duties and guidance set out in the following policy and amendments:

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5); The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006; The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010; The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011; The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

### **2. Aim:**

To achieve excellent attendance for all students – which we define as over 95%;

We will work to achieve this aim by:

- Reducing the number of unauthorised absences;
- Reducing the number of persistently absent students- ie those with under 85% attendance;
- Reducing the number of unnecessary term time absences;
- Engaging students, parents and staff by raising awareness of their responsibilities in terms of attendance;
- Monitoring trends and patterns of attendance in order to identify attendance concerns early;
- Communicating the school's expectations clearly with students, parents and staff;
- Engaging support from external agencies to address issues which impact on attendance

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities:**

#### **Deputy Head Pastoral:**

- To oversee and monitor whole school attendance;
- To liaise with Heads of Year, Assistant Heads of Year and Attendance Improvement Officer, Attendance Administrator (SIMS) and Children Missing Education Service.

#### **Assistant Heads of Year:**

- To monitor and oversee overall attendance in their year groups;
- To check registers;
- To monitor student attendance patterns;
- To co-ordinate action with tutors, parents, Home School Welfare Manager, and Attendance Improvement Officer to address issues which impact on good attendance;
- To support and encourage students to attend regularly and be punctual.

#### **Subject staff:**

- To keep accurate registers, using the correct codes for absence, see *Appendix 2*;
- To support children with absences to catch-up learning missed and re-integrate back into class.

**Tutors:**

- To explain, promote and model the expectations we expect in students;
- To record student attendance and punctuality accurately, receive communications from parents and liaise with the SIMS attendance administrator, HOY or AHOY.

**SEN Co-ordinator:**

- To support students to reduce obstacles to learning;
- To be involved in reintegration programmes as necessary.

**Home School Welfare Manager:**

- To be the initial home/school point of contact;
- To report specific student issues to HOY, AHOY, Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Improvement Officer.

**Students:**

- To take responsibility for their attendance;
- To arrive punctually to registration and lessons. Students need to be in morning registration by 8:45 and afternoon registration by 1:50;
- To ensure that they receive their attendance mark, signing in when late, bringing in notes before or after absences. Students arriving after 9:15 or 2pm in the afternoon must be marked as unauthorised absences using the late code U.
- To sign in/out at Reception when arriving in school or when required to leave school during the school day. Students should have a note from parents or a dental/ medical appointment card.

**Parents and Carers:**

- To take responsibility for school attendance and punctuality in accordance with legal obligations;
- To contact the school and report absences on the first day, either by phone call, email or on Parent Portal, and every day thereafter until the child returns to school.
- To co-operate with the school and avoid escalation of cases to the Attendance Improvement Officer;
- To request a meeting with the school if they are concerned about their child's attendance;
- To avoid requesting absence in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. See Appendix 5.

**SIMS Attendance Administrator:**

- To compile registration data on a daily basis using Lesson Monitor;
- To provide attendance data weekly, termly and yearly for monitoring by school staff;
- To record details of parents who contact school with absence information;
- To make phone calls to ascertain reasons for absence using the following priority:
  - Looked After Child
  - Pupil Premium Children
  - Students with a high number of unauthorised/ unverified absences

- Students below 90% attendance
- Other vulnerable students;
- To write letters to request reasons for absences from parents/ carers;
- To maintain information relating to exceptional requests for leave of absence in term time;
- To ensure paper registers are available for trips, emergency evacuations, other circumstances;
- To liaise/ meet with Attendance Improvement Officer, AHOY and Deputy Head on a regular basis to share information on absentees, holiday applications and social problems;
- To attend appropriate training to keep abreast of developments in attendance.
- To maintain a paper register in case of system failure.

#### **Attendance Improvement Officer:**

- To liaise with Deputy Head teacher, AHOY, HOY and Home School Welfare Manager, SENCO and other staff regarding concerns over student absence;
- Meet regularly with Deputy Head, AHOY or HOY to deal with attendance issues, promote better communication and monitor/tackle persistent absence;
- To use data to highlight patterns and trends within the student body;
- To make home visits, where necessary, to support parents/carers to ensure their children attend regularly;
- To work with external agencies, such as CAMHS or HERS, attending meetings where practical, to support improving attendance;
- To inform the CMES of students whose absence without notification exceeds 10 days;
- To liaise with the CMES to apply for prosecution or application for a penalty notice;
- To attend the Safeguarding group and raise any concerns regarding child protection and safety with Deputy Head/ Designated Safeguarding Lead.

#### **Rewards and Incentives:**

- Wherever possible, students will be rewarded for excellent attendance.
- Rewards will include: acknowledging improved attendance by students; receiving a 100% attendance certificate at the end of the year; meeting with HOY when termly 100% attendance is achieved; a tutor group reward is given to tutor groups which achieve 100% attendance in any one week.

#### **Prolonged Absence**

- Continued medical absences must, where ever possible, be supported by some medical evidence for example, appointment card, prescription, doctor's note.
- Reintegration of students upon return to school involves careful planning and flexibility. Parents/ carers should be involved at every stage. Return expectations should be set in advance with a named member of staff (teaching or support) to support the child.
- Consideration may be given to the use of a phased return or negotiated timetable. Subject teachers will provide details of relevant work to "catch-up". The duration of this part time or phased return can be no longer than 6 weeks, unless support is gained from an outside agency such as Hospital Education Reintegration Service (HERS) or CAMHS.
- HERS will be engaged to support students to access education when a defined medical need is identified through a medical professional such as a Consultant or CAMHS worker. The school will require evidence in writing that the student is unfit to attend school. Medical

advice will always be sought to ensure that educational programmes fit with a student's physical or mental health needs.

- Regular review and amendment of programmes will occur.
- Students failing to attend school and parents failing to respond to school support and interventions for a period of 10 days or more from the last appearance, will be reported to the Local Authority Children Missing Education service, and potentially removed from roll.

#### **4: Monitoring:**

- The Attendance Monitoring group will meet monthly to discuss attendance and review data. This group will consist of the Deputy Head Pastoral, Attendance Improvement Officer and SIMS Attendance Administrator.
- Regular fortnightly meetings will occur with the Attendance Improvement Officer and AHOY.
- Concerns about student attendance will be dealt with using a standard procedure, see *Appendix4*.
- Monitoring will start for all students from under 90% attendance, but for Free School Meals or PPI students from under 92%.
- A monthly Safeguarding meeting will occur to discuss attendance and other safeguarding issues. This will be attended by the School Health Nurse, AIO, Home School Welfare Manager, Deputy Head, Behaviour Support Manager, Pastoral Support worker and other staff, when appropriate.
- The policy and its implementation will be monitored by Governors' Curriculum and Pupils committee.

#### **5: Complaints:**

Parents/carers should refer complaints in the first instance to the Deputy Head, (Pastoral). If they are unhappy with the school's response then the normal complaints procedures apply and information on how to complain is held on the school website.

#### **Related documents and Policies**

Accessibility Plan  
Equalities Plan  
Behaviour and Bullying Policy  
SEND Policy  
Medical Health Needs Policy

**Committee: Curriculum and Pupils**

**Approved: June 2015**

**Review date: June 2017**

## **Attendance Policy: - Appendix 1**

### **Legal Position:**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable education by regularly school attendance or otherwise.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that children attend, and stay, at school. They are also responsible for informing schools of any absences as soon as possible, ideally on the first day of absence.

It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. The Education (Student Registration) (Amendment) regulations 1997 state that attendance records must show whether an absence of child of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

The Local Authority's duties are to provide regular education and also ensure that parents fulfil their responsibilities by sending their children to school. If necessary it must institute legal proceedings against parents of non-attending children (DFEE School Attendance 1994).

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

## Attendance Policy: - Appendix 2: Attendance Codes

<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>/</b>	<b>Present</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Educated off site ( not dual registration)</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Exceptional circumstances</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Dual registered</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Excluded where no alternative provision is made (up to day 6)</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Family holiday not agree or in excess of agreement</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Holiday agreed</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Illness</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Late before registers close</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Medical or dental appointment</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>No reason yet provided for absence</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Approved sporting activity</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Religious observance</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Study leave</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Traveller absence</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>Late after registration has closed</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>Educational visit or trip</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Work Experience</b>

## **Attendance Policy: - Appendix 3: Penalty Notice information for parents/carers**

Where children have unauthorised absences as a result of a family holiday in term time, legal action may be taken against each parent under the following legislation:

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her child, being of compulsory school age, fails to attend regularly the school at which he or she is a registered student. Section 444A allows for a penalty notice to be issued to parents who commit such an offence. With effect from 1 September 2013 the penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in prosecution where on conviction the parent could be liable to a fine of up to £1000.

### **CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION SERVICE PENALTY NOTICES - INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

#### **• *What is a Penalty Notice?***

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced the Penalty Notice as an alternative to prosecution. A Penalty Notice does not require an appearance in Court but still aims to secure an improvement in attendance.

Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

#### **• *Why has it been introduced?***

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

#### **• *How much will it be?***

£60 - If payment is made within 28 days. £120 - if paid after this but within 42 days. Penalty Notices may be issued to each parent of each child who has unauthorised absences. This means that the total penalty is £120 per parent per child; for example, a family of two parents and two children may receive a total penalty of £480.

#### **• *How will they be issued?***

By post, to the parents' home address.

#### **• *When will they be used?***

Penalty Notices may be used in to tackle unauthorised absence in the following circumstances:

- Where the parent has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation, especially, but not solely, where the absence will lead to the child missing public examinations i.e. SATs and GCSEs.
- Where following a truancy sweep, enquiries show that the school has recorded the pupil's absence for that session as unauthorised.
- In cases where students are persistently late for school after the register has closed.
- In cases where a pupil's parents fail to work with the school and the Children Missing Education Service to improve attendance.

Penalty notices will normally be issued where a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the 100 sessions prior to the request for a penalty notice to be issued. However, in some circumstances, such as Family Holidays in Term Time, a notice may be issued for any period of unauthorised absence. Penalty notices may be issued to any or all parents as defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996.

Parents will not be issued with more than 2 separate penalty notices per child in any twelve-month period.



The Children Missing Education Service does not take legal action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to its enforcement powers. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that these powers will be used if this will help in securing a child's education.

• ***Is a Warning Given?***

Yes, you will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued, which will tell you the extent of your child's absences and give you at least 15 school days in which to effect an improvement. In that time your child must have no unauthorised absences from school.

Where Penalty Notices are issued in respect of family holidays taken in term time, a warning will normally be given on the first occasion that such absence is not authorised by the school.

There is no limit to the number of times formal warning of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

• ***Is there an appeal process?***

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning from the school you can contact the Deputy Headteacher/Head teacher to discuss the matter of your child's absence.

• ***How do I pay?***

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. You need to be aware that payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices.

• ***What happens if I do not pay?***

You have up to 42 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If full payment is not received within this timescale the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor attendance by your child.

If proven, this can result in fines of up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders, Community Sentences or imprisonment depending upon circumstances.

• ***Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice but my child is still missing school?***

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that you work closely with your child's school and support agencies such as the Children Missing Education Service.

• ***Can I get help if my child is not attending regularly?***

Yes, your child's school and the Children Missing Education Service will give you advice and support if you need help with your child's attendance. It is very important that you speak with the school at your earliest opportunity if you have any worries at all about securing your child's attendance.

For more information contact:

Children Missing Education Service PO Box 25

Riverside

Keynsham

BS31 1DN

Tel: 01225 394241

E-mail: CMES@bathnes.gov.uk

## **Attendance Policy: - Appendix 4: Standard Attendance Monitoring Procedure:**

A staged approach will be used and letters will be sent through all stages of the process.

Warning letters will be sent if attendance falls below certain levels:

### **Stage 1:**

If attendance falls below 90% (below 92% for PPI students), AHOY and AIO will monitor the student for a period of 2 weeks. Young person will be spoken to and parents/carers will be called by the AHOY. Attendance Tracker will be completed.

If attendance fails to improve, then Stage 2 will be instigated.

### **Stage 2**

When attendance continues to fall or does not improve, the AIO will contact parents and **Letter 1** sent

- a) Assessment of situation
- b) Verbal / written identification of the problem.
- c) Advice on remedying the situation
- d) Set an attendance target set over the next two weeks

### **Stage 3**

If target is not met, **Letter 2** will be sent and AIO will contact parents again inviting them in for a meeting or a home visit. Review will occur in 4 weeks.

### **Stage 4**

An Attendance Panel Meeting will be called if no improvement. The following actions will be considered:-

- a) AIO and/ HOY will work with students and parents/carers on improving attendance
- b) Remind parents of their legal duties under 1996 Education Act
- c) Referral to outside agencies may be made if indicated
- d) Illness/Medical absences will need to be verified by Doctor's note or GP contact
- e) All future medical absences or illnesses will have to have medical evidence provided

### **Stage 5**

If there is no improvement in the student's attendance at Attendance Panel review after 6 weeks, the School will contact CMES who based on evidence provided by the school will issue a Penalty Notice or consider other legal action.

Penalty Notices are fines, issued by B&NES CMES, for a child's unauthorised absence from school.

The service will always consider legal action when there is no legitimate reason for absence.

The CMES will not take legal action if previously poor attendance is now improving. Instead they will monitor the case and support the student. If attendance does not improve, or if absences begin to increase the CMES will re-assess the case to see if legal action is needed.

### **Stage 6**

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the Education Act 1996 (Appendix 1)

The same process may also be followed with students whose attendance is above 85% but who have 10 or more unauthorised absences

MAP meetings (Medical Action Plans) are for those students who have significant medical needs that might affect their attendance. The parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting with the School Nurse and AHOY/ HOY to discuss any issues in which the school can support these issues. If deemed necessary, attendance targets will be put in place. The School Nurse will work closely with School and the family to resolve any concerns/issues. Regular review of the Medical Action Plan will occur to ensure that changing medical needs are understood.

**Attendance Policy: - Appendix 5: Parental Guidance on Attendance:**

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>
- [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/268648/advice\\_on\\_school\\_attendance\\_nov\\_2013.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268648/advice_on_school_attendance_nov_2013.pdf)