

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



1. RACI – Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed

22 November 2021		Policy - RACI Report	
Attendance and punctuality policy			
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RACI - Responsibility, Accountability, Consultation, Informed			
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School Vision

At Chesswood Junior School we inspire our whole school community to enjoy their learning adventure and have fun along the way. We ignite a passion for learning throughout the school community, securing excellence, empathy and equality in all that we do.

School Mission

We will strive to achieve the highest standards of academic achievement and behaviour within a vibrant, exciting learning environment so that all children leave this school with confidence and the ability to take advantage of future opportunities.

Policy Links

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies

Policy/Guidance/ Poster	<u>System Link</u>
	<u>School Website Link</u>

Core

School website attendance collection	<u>https://www.chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk/page/?title=Attendance+%26amp%3B+Punctuality&pid=203&action=saved</u>
School Attendance: guidance for schools	<u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance</u>
Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic	<u>https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak</u>
WSCC School absences	<u>https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-attendance-and-behaviour/school-absences/</u>
Role of Pupil Entitlement: Investigation	<u>https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-attendance-and-behaviour/school-absences/#role-of-pupil-entitlement-investigation</u>



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School attendance and absence	
	https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance

General

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3. Introduction

At Chesswood we firmly believe that for all pupils to gain the greatest possible benefit from their education, both academically and social, regular school attendance is of vital importance. Non-attendance at school, even for short periods, can impact on academic achievement. Any absence also disrupts teaching and learning for others in the class as important work missed by an absent child will have to be addressed. Regular attendance is also important for setting an expectation for future patterns of behaviour as they become part of the working world. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Although the guiding principles and procedures by which the School will address matters of attendance and punctuality are clearly outlined within this policy, it is recognised that the professional judgments made by Senior Leaders may lead to decisions which deviate in some aspect of policy in response to an individual set of circumstances.

We do not measure, record or report attendance for any target driven reason, simply because any time away from the planned curriculum is likely to have a negative impact on your child's learning. The overwhelming majority of parents recognise this and take every opportunity to ensure their child attends school, even when they are not on top form or feeling under the weather – send them in this is the right thing to do.

The table below indicates the impact of certain proportions of time away from school:

How much time is really missed?	
Average Attendance	<u>Years</u> absent from school
95%	1 year absent in 20 (approximately six months over whole school life)
90%	1 year absent in 10
80%	1 year absent in every 5
75%	1 year absent in every 4
66%	1 year absent in every 3
Turn up, <u>Turn up</u> on time, Turn up ready for action...	
Dream Aspire Achieve	

Please ensure you work with the school in your child's best interests and maximise the time they attend school.



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4. Attendance and the Law

The Education Act 1996 places a legal duty on all parents to ensure that their child has an education. When this education is provided in a school setting parents must ensure their child attends regularly. If the parent is unable to ensure this they can be held accountable for an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996; failure to secure the regular school attendance of a child. The term regular has recently been defined to mean 'as prescribed by the school'. For the majority of pupils, this means attending school full time. Any unauthorised absence is therefore irregular attendance.

As with any law, the parameters are firm and the Education Act 1996 goes further as the offence is one of strict liability. This means there are only certain permitted defenses the parent can use for their child missing school. One such defense is the child was unfit to attend school due to ill health. The parent must prove this to be the case. Only a Head Teacher can authorize absence from school. They may request supporting medical evidence from the parent which shows the pupil is unfit to attend school.

This request is often made to avoid the matter moving into a legal process. Medical evidence can include appointment cards; prescriptions, reports from medical professionals etc. The weight and value of the evidence is one for the Head Teacher to consider in their decision making of whether an absence is to be authorized or not.

5. Expectations and Responsibilities

At Chesswood Junior School we believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

5.1. *School Governing Body*

To support good attendance the Governing Body will:

- ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents;
- annually review the school Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy;
- ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with;
- agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year;
- monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings (Pastoral);
- ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time;
- ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance;
- ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils;



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- ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence;
- ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

5.2. *Pupils*

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly seeking always to attend more than 96%;
- attend school punctually arriving at the school gates before 8.45 a.m.;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;

5.3. *Parents and Carers*

We expect that all parents who have day to day responsibility for their children will:

secure Good attendance average is expected to be no less than 96% in any school year.

encourage regular school attendance as part of their legal responsibilities;

Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment;

ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;

ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school, stating clearly the reason for absence;

contact the school by using online form on the first day of the child's absence and keep the school fully informed for longer periods of absence;

contact the school promptly (before 9.00 a.m.) whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school;

inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance;

not keep children in their care away from school for any unauthorised reason;

avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours

avoid making requests for term time absence unless there are genuine exceptional circumstances.

ensure that the school has up to date contact details at all times.



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5.4. All School Staff

The duty to support good attendance in school is a responsibility shared by all staff of Chesswood School. All staff will encourage good attendance by:

- providing a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- providing a safe learning environment;
- providing a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- demonstrating a strong attendance ethos ;
- taking part in assemblies sharing the importance of good attendance and celebrating good attendance;
- being aware of attendance issues and ensuring that concerns are shared promptly with the Pastoral Deputy Head.

5.5. Pastoral Deputy Head

The Pastoral Deputy Head will lead attendance management and development. Specific responsibilities are as follows:

- Implement and quality assure policy, guidance & systems for maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Ensure that school attendance data is submitted to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Where deemed necessary, communicate with parents verbally or by letter
- Delegate attendance and punctuality tasks to colleagues holding them to account for their actions
- Oversee the Fixed Penalty Notice referrals
- Oversee referrals to and meetings with the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Design and manage re-integration programmes
- Where required, lead and manage Educational Supervision Orders
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to SLT
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated



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5.6. *Attendance Admin Assistant*

In conjunction with responsibilities outlined for all staff, specific responsibilities for the Attendance Admin. Assistant are as follows:

- Collate information from the school registers.
- Enter daily attendance data into SIMS
- Run SIMs Attendance and Punctuality Report and Update Attendance and Punctuality Report Master Weekly to identify:
 - Attendance and punctuality risks
 - highest class attendance in each year group each week for attendance cup
- Make contact with the parents of those children are absent where no valid reason has been given.
- Contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence – note outcome of contact.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to ascertain whether to authorise the absence,
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- Keep the Pastoral Deputy informed of noted attendance issues.
- Support the Fixed Penalty Notice referrals procedure by generating parental letters and referral paperwork
- Produce attendance certificates and data upon request.
 - the Attendance Admin Assistant will monitor every pupil's attendance daily;
 - the Attendance Admin Assistant record all lateness, seek reasons for lateness and keep thorough record. Where there is no valid reason for lateness or a trend, further clarification of reasons will be sought from parents and reported to the Pastoral Leader;
 - the Attendance Admin Assistant will make current attendance information available for SLT and outside agencies as required by producing attendance certificates when requested;
 - the Attendance Admin Assistant will make initial enquiries of parents of pupils who are not attending regularly and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance. Where necessary the Attendance Admin Assistant will manage other office staff to:
 - contact parents, via a phone call in the first instance, as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and no message has been received to explain the absence;
 - follow up all unexplained absences to obtain valid reasons the absence;
 - Manage the recording of late arrivals.



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5.7. *Pastoral HLTA*

In conjunction with responsibilities outlined for all staff, specific responsibilities for the pastoral HLTA are as follows:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils, parents and families
- In partnership with the DHP provide guidance, coaching and sign posting to TA colleagues in attendance management.
- Actively seek new positive attendance strategies that could be incorporated into attendance guidance.
- Contact parents regarding attendance or punctuality issues – following termly data cycle – standard letters informing parents of attendance or punctuality percentages. (Liaise with DHP ensuring letters sent to specific families)
- Work in close partnership with general administration assistant to support data reporting for DHP use. Always remain alert to individual children whose attendance or punctuality regresses, reporting this to DHP in writing (email) immediately.
- Take a lead in the administration of pastoral support plans – arranging meetings, taking minutes, alerting leaders to next meeting.
- In liaison with DHP, develop and lead attendance intervention programmes for individuals and small groups as appropriate and as detailed within Pastoral Support Plans
- Make regular contact with children whose attendance falls into the persistent absentee category (be their buddy in school) taking actions in accordance with agreed plans – keeping on-going written notes of significant comments, actions or concerns in relation to the child. Develop and maintain positive communication with families.
- Actively seek views of children with regard to the aids and barriers to attendance and punctuality keep DHP well informed of the outcomes of formal and informal conversations through email
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families

5.8. *Class Teachers*

In conjunction with responsibilities outlined for all staff, specific responsibilities for class teachers are as follows:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily through the use of a formal electronic school register. This register will be completed by 9:00 a.m. and saved for office access. The afternoon register should be completed and saved by 1.25 p.m.
- Seek to welcome individuals into the class each morning, greeting and enquiring as to their well-being.
- Notify any attendance concerns or absence patterns to Pastoral DHT.



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5.9. *Teaching Assistants/HLTA*

In conjunction with responsibilities outlined for all staff, specific responsibilities for teaching assistants/HLTA are as follows:

Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, when requested by the teacher or covering a class.

6. Promoting Good Attendance

The importance of regular attendance is recognized by all staff at Chesswood. Chesswood School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment which engages pupils in their learning;
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book and register in case of a fire drill;
- By celebrating 100% attendance or improving attendance. Celebrating weekly the class in each year group with the highest weekly attendance and displaying the results.
- Report individual pupil attendance figures on school reports to parents.
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare if the irregular attendance continues.
- Providing information for parents via newsletter or specific communication regarding the effects of non-attendance and school attendance progress and statistics.
- Setting attendance targets for the school. Targets may also be set for cohorts or classes where a need is recognised.
- Early intervention when pupil attendance gives cause for concern.
- Providing support systems for the most vulnerable pupils.



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7. Monitoring Levels of Attendance

Monitoring and tracking attendance will make use of the following colour coded thresholds:

Category	Attendance
Blue	99% - 100%
Green	96% - 98.99%
Yellow	93% – 95.99%
Amber	90% - 92.99%
Red	=< 89.99%

It is recognised that cases of absence may be of an individual nature and, subsequently, responses to these may be different depending on circumstance. However, as a general rule, pupils whose attendance falls below 92% will be subject to review and parental contact made (letter, phone call or meeting) to discuss the issue, if there are no clear mitigating circumstances. It is noted that the first half term of any academic year can present low percentage figures due to the lower of possible attendance days. Pupils whose attendance falls to a level of 90% or below are considered 'persistent absentees'. These pupils will be subject to specific action and there case discussed with the Educational Welfare Service where required.

8. Reporting and Requesting Absence

If your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, it is essential that we receive notification, preferably in advance, on the first day of their absence and at the latest by 9:00 am on the first day of absence.

There are two types of absence processes:

8.1. *Reporting Child Sickness Absence*

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- Report absence when a child is ill and the absence is unplanned i.e. following flu symptoms; sickness and diarrhoea. On the day by 9:00 a.m. or from the previous days when a decision is taken that a child will be too ill to attend school the following day.
- Online reporting is required unless the family does not have access to internet, please only call to report absence in exceptional circumstances.

Online Sickness Absence Form <https://forms.office.com/r/F1sKiAgxg5>

- Information gained from first day absence information will be used by the Attendance Admin. Assistant to update the registers.



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- If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), the school will send a letter of concern to parents or invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school will tell parents that if the absence persists that the matter will be discussed with the Pupil Entitlement and Investigation Team.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the PEI may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

8.2. Requesting Authorised Absence

In line with Government legislation, leave of absence during term time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. If such circumstances exist, then the matter should be discussed with the school well in advance (if circumstances permit) of any intended absence period. The Pastoral Deputy Head will decide whether or not the absence can be authorised. No parent can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.

Parents are expected to arrange scheduled time off, such as holidays or other overseas visits and family gatherings, during the non-term time periods. There are 175 non term time days across any given year. This represents ample opportunity to organise and take family related activities or holidays.

The maximum number of days that can be authorised (in exceptional circumstances) either side of a 2 week or more school holiday period is 5 days, even if travelling overseas for family circumstances. Three weeks is considered sufficient time to deal with family matters overseas and return to school.

If parents take their child out of school for a period of absence without the agreement of the School, following full discussion regarding the circumstances for the request, then the absence will be recorded unauthorised. Such action may result in a fixed penalty notice. In any circumstance where absence has been authorised by the school, if the child does not return to school on the date agreed then the additional absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

How to request absence:

- When there is a known planned absence that requires authorisation e.g. medical appointment, doctor's appointment. This form would also be used to request absence when the family will be away from home during the term time e.g. wedding, visiting elderly or unwell relatives, holiday. This form should also be completed if a member of the family is ill and therefore the child cannot travel to school.
- It is necessary for the parent requesting absence under exceptional circumstances so



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that leaders can make an informed reliable decision. It is important to note there are 14 weeks already available (including statutory INSET days). We strongly advise parents to avoid making any arrangements prior to absence being authorised. We may request a meeting with parents that do apply in response to exceptional circumstances. Visits to the dentist or doctor for routine check-ups should be arranged outside school hours and in school holidays.

Online Request for authorised absence <https://forms.office.com/r/xKmNvQhVxh>

9. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The School will classify each half day absence as either authorised or unauthorised depending on the circumstances. This is solely a school decision based on the information provided.

An absence will be authorised for reasons deemed valid in accordance to local and national guidance. These might include:

- Illness
- Medical appointments unavoidably scheduled in school time
- Authorised leave of absence
- Emergencies or exceptional circumstances

An absence will be deemed unauthorised where the School does not consider that valid reason has not been given or no explanation of absence has been provided. These might include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Birthday treats
- Days out
- Shopping trips
- Late after the register closes
- Holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Unexplained absence

Approved educational activities whereby a child may be not present on the school site are deemed to present in relation to attendance return figures. These include activities such as:

- Educational day visits
- Residential visits
- Sporting events

10. Absence for Religious Observance

Chesswood acknowledges the multi-faith nature of our local community and recognises that on some occasions, very significant religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this requires a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious



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observance.

It is considered reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of such a religious observance, if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school and seek authorisation using the 'Request Term Time Absence' form.

11. Other Exceptional Absence

Chesswood School will make every effort to remain open under all circumstances. However school closure may be unavoidable due to unforeseen circumstances. In the event of such a closure the non-attendance of pupils will not be counted in Chesswood Schools attendance statistics, as set out in regulation 6(5)(a).

However, where Chesswood School is able to remain open under adverse conditions, any pupil who is not able to get to school a pupil may be marked as unable to attend on the school attendance register. This is intended to capture circumstances in which children are unable get to school because of serious disruption to travel caused by:

- a weather-related emergency, such as snow or flooding
- a natural disaster, such as the impact on air travel of a volcanic eruption
- a health-related emergency, such as restrictions on travel in certain areas related to a foot and mouth outbreak
- travel disruption caused by the rationing or non-availability of fuel.

The exceptional circumstances in which a pupil may be marked as unable to attend are where:

(a) the school site, or part of it, is closed due to unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend; or

(b) in the case of a pupil for whom transport to school is provided by the school or a local education authority, and whose home is not within walking distance of the school, that transport is not available.

(c) a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This section of the policy sets out the circumstances which would justify schools' use of the relevant attendance code (Y code), without itemising every conceivable kind of emergency that would count as exceptional circumstances. The Head Teachers will use his discretion about when to apply the Y code, while exercising that judgment within the parameters of the DfE regulations.



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12. Punctuality

It is important that children arrive at school on time. Poor punctuality has an adverse effect on learning. If a child misses the start of the day then they will miss the vital teaching input at the start of the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt the learning of others. The following procedure is followed:

- Children are expected to arrive between 8:30 a.m. and 8:50 a.m.. Children may enter the school at 8:50 at the beginning of the school day.
- Teachers are expected to complete the class register before 9:00 a.m. and ensure it is returned to the school office.
- School gates are closed at 8:50 a.m. .
- Children arriving after 8:50 a.m. are expected to register at the school office and will be recorded in the late book and be given a late slip to show their class teacher. This is to ensure that class teachers are aware that the child has been registered.
- Children arriving between 8.50 a.m. and 9.20 a.m. will be recorded as late. Children arriving after 9.20 a.m. will be recorded as late after the register has closed. This will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless a valid reason has been provided, e.g. medical appointment.

Punctuality data will be closely monitored. Parents will be informed of regular poor punctuality and the issue discussed in order to secure an improvement.

13. Legal Sanctions

The School will make every effort to work with pupils and parents, providing appropriate support, in order to secure improvements in attendance. Unauthorised absence may lead to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs the School, in conjunction with the Educational Welfare Service, will consider the use of legal sanctions. Such action will not be taken lightly but may be necessary in order to return pupils to their education with required levels of attendance and secure full parental understanding of their legal obligation to ensure school attendance, i.e. if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

All potential decisions regarding a legal response to non-attendance will be discussed fully with the Educational Welfare Service, who will determine the most suitable course of action. Alternatives to court prosecution will be considered, including:

- Fixed Penalty Notices (see appendix)
 - These will be considered when:
 - A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
 - A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve



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○ Educational Supervision Orders

These are used as an alternative to prosecution and are:

- intended to support parents in fulfilling their legal responsibilities
- only suitable when there is co-operation between the Local Authority and the family

If an Educational Supervision Order is granted then a supervising officer will be appointed and is likely to be an appropriate representative from the school.

14. Recording Attendance

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

15. Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Chesswood Middle school staff, in writing, as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the Chesswood school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education welfare.

Equality Impact Assessment

Policy Audit



Appendices

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