

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



RACI – Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed

08 September 2022		Policy - RACI Report	
Attendance and punctuality policy			
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Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



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>
<i>Behaviour Policy</i>	
Child Protections & Safeguarding Policy	

<i>School website attendance collection</i>	<u>https://www.chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk/page/?title=Attendance+%26amp%3B+Punctuality&pid=203&action=saved</u>
<i>School Attendance: guidance for schools</i>	<u>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance</u>
	<u>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/581539/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf</u>
<i>WSCC School absences</i>	<u>https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-attendance-and-behaviour/school-absences/</u>
<i>Role of Pupil Entitlement: Investigation</i>	<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>
<i>School attendance and absence</i>	<u>https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance</u>



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Policy Audit Foci

Policy Audit Sub Form
Audit
The school community is acutely aware of the benefits of good attendance and punctuality
Academic, pastoral and admin staff know and apply the 'Working Together' flow model
Absence is reduced – with a particular focus on persistent and severe absence
Clear processes are in place to identify absence patterns early
The overwhelming majority of parents find actions taken to be supportive and positive



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Contents

RACI – RESPONSIBLE, ACCOUNTABLE, CONSULTED, INFORMED	2
SCHOOL VISION	3
SCHOOL MISSION	3
POLICY LINKS.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.1. AIMS	8
1.2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE	8
1.3. THE LAW ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND RIGHT TO A FULL-TIME EDUCATION	8
1.4. WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT ATTENDANCE	8
2. WORKING TOGETHER – EXPECT	10
2.1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	10
2.1.1. <i>The governing board</i>	10
2.1.2. <i>The headteacher</i>	10
2.1.3. <i>The designated senior leader responsible for attendance</i>	11
2.1.4. <i>Attendance Admin Assistant</i>	12
2.1.5. <i>Learning Mentor - Attendance</i>	13
2.1.6. <i>Class Teachers</i>	14
2.1.7. <i>All School Staff</i>	14
2.1.8. <i>Parents/carers</i>	14
2.1.9. <i>Pupils</i>	15
2.2. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE.....	15
3. WORKING TOGETHER - MONITOR	16
3.1. RECORDING ATTENDANCE	16
3.1.1. <i>Attendance register</i>	16
3.1.2. <i>Reporting Unplanned absence</i>	17
3.1.3. <i>Planned absence</i>	17
3.1.4. <i>Lateness and punctuality</i>	18
3.1.5. <i>Following up unexplained absence</i>	19
3.1.6. <i>Reporting to parents/carers</i>	19
3.2. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE	19
3.2.1. <i>Approval for term-time absence</i>	19
3.2.2. <i>Exceptional Circumstances</i>	20
3.2.3. <i>Other Exceptional Absence</i>	21
3.3. MONITORING ATTENDANCE	21



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



3.3.1.	Using data to improve attendance.....	22
3.3.2.	Reducing persistent and severe absence.....	22
3.3.2.1.	Persistent Absence	22
3.3.2.2.	Severe Absence.....	22
3.3.3.	Analysing Attendance Data.....	23
3.3.4.	Monitoring Cycle	23
4.	WORKING TOGETHER – ACTION & SUPPORT.....	24
4.1.	LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND	24
4.2.	FACILITATE SUPPORT	25
4.3.	FORMALISE SUPPORT.....	25
4.3.1.	Part-time timetables	26
4.3.2.	Parenting Contracts.....	26
4.3.2.1.	Parenting Contracts - Content.....	27
4.3.2.2.	Non-compliance with a parenting contract	28
4.3.3.	Education Supervision Orders.....	29
4.3.3.1.	Education Supervision Orders – Contents	29
4.3.3.2.	Non-compliance with an ESO.....	30
4.4.	ENFORCE.....	30
4.4.1.	Attendance Prosecution	31
4.4.2.	Parenting Orders	31
4.4.3.	Fixed Penalty Notices	31
4.4.3.1.	Payment of penalties	32
5.	CHANGING SCHOOLS.....	32
	APPENDICES	34
	ATTENDANCE CODES	34
	PRESENT.....	34
	AUTHORISED ABSENCE.....	34
	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE.....	39
	ATTENDING AN APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY	40
	UNABLE TO ATTEND DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.....	43
	ADMINISTRATIVE CODES.....	43



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



1. 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 on time</u> , 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.



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



1.1. ***Aims***

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

1.2. ***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.

1.3. ***The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education***

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. **Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.**

1.4. ***Working Together to Support Attendance***

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we and any partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction our efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

We will seek to successfully treat the root causes of absence and remove barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly. This requires us to work collaboratively with, not against families. We will seek to:

	Expect	We aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
	Monitor	We rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
	Listen and understand	When a pattern is spotted, we discuss with pupils and parents and listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
	Facilitate Support	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
	Formalise Support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.
	Enforce	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



2. Working Together – EXPECT

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils. It is everyone's responsibility. We will work together to promote the benefits of good attendance, set high expectations for every pupil and communicate these expectations clearly to pupils and parents.

In setting high expectations across all areas of the school - including curriculum, safeguarding, behaviour, pastoral support, SEN and support for disadvantaged pupils; we set the expectations and culture of an inclusive, welcoming, calm, happy and supportive school. This sets the foundations for good attendance.

We recognise that attendance will never be 'solved' and will build a school community that sets the high expectations to maximise attendance at all times.

2.1. *Roles 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.

2.1.1. *The governing board*

The governor with overall accountability for attendance is Philippa Jackson

The governing board is responsible for:

- 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

2.1.2. *The headteacher*

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the implementation of this policy at school
- Ensuring the monitoring of school-level absence data is robust and timely and ensuring it is reported to governors
- Ensuring staff are supported with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Ensuring the monitoring of impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Ensuring fixed-penalty notices are issued, where necessary



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



2.1.3. The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (deputy head teacher) is responsible for:

- 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 (typically undertaken by the Attendance Learning Mentor)
- Ensuring targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Implement and quality assure policy, guidance & systems to maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that 'Working together to improve school attendance' is embedded in school practice.
- 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jez Himsworth and can be contacted via 01903 204141 or email jhimsworth@chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



2.1.4. 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 Bromcom
- Run Bromcom 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 Attendance Learning Mentor and 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.



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



2.1.5. Learning Mentor - Attendance

In conjunction with responsibilities outlined for all staff, specific responsibilities for the Learning Mentor - Attendance are as follows:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/[role] (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- 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 pupils and families, identify barriers to attendance and seek to address the issues through action and intervention
- In partnership with the DHP provide guidance, coaching and sign posting to 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
- Review impact of key strategies developed and report termly to governors on the impact
- The Learning Mentor - Attendance [Elaine Butler] and can be contacted via 01903 204141 or email ebutler@chesswood.w-sussex.sch.uk .



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



2.1.6. 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 (Bromcom). 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.
- Engage with families regarding attendance issues, especially at parent consultation meetings.

2.1.7. 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 Learning Mentor – Attendance and the Pastoral Deputy Head.

2.1.8. Parents/carers

Parents / carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time except when their child is ill or has a previously agreed authorised absence
- Ensure good attendance: average is expected to be no less than 96% in any school year.
- 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;
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child ensuring the school has up-to-date contact details
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Encourage regular school attendance as part of their legal responsibilities;
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment;



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



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

2.1.9. 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;

2.2. Strategies for promoting attendance

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

- Providing a caring and welcoming learning environment which engages pupils in their learning.
- Clearly communicate the benefits of good attendance and the detrimental impact of reduced attendance.
- Responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils.
- 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.
- Celebrating 100% attendance or improving attendance. Celebrating weekly the class in each year group with the highest weekly attendance and displaying the results.
- Celebrating those who are on a journey of improving attendance.
- Reporting individual pupil attendance figures on school reports to parents.
- 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



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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.
 - Wrap-around-care
 - Ambition clubs
 - Pastoral interventions – supporting ‘belonging’
- Providing support systems for the most vulnerable pupils.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This will include in displays, assemblies and in registration. Where used sensitively and without discrimination, this will also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.

3. Working Together - MONITOR

3.1. *Recording Attendance*

3.1.1. *Attendance register*

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register by 9:00am of each school day and after the lunch break by 1:25pm. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school from 8:30am and by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 9:00am (from 8:50am) and will be kept open until 9:20am.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken by 1:25pm (from 1:15pm).

3.1.2. Reporting Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or from the previous days when a decision is taken that a child will be too ill to attend school the following day. They should use the school's online '[Reporting Sickness Absence](#)' form on the school's website – [HOME > PARENTS > ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY > REPORTING SICKNESS ABSENCE](#)

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3.1.3. Planned 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



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



across any given year. This represents ample opportunity to organise and take family related activities or holidays. As, in line with government guidance, we only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that it will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Under exceptional circumstances pupils may be granted absence from school. Any request for absence must be submitted BEFORE the absence is undertaken unless there is an emergency that would naturally take priority.

Under normal circumstances we would ask for a minimum of five working days notice being given before the first day of absence. In an emergency, as a minimum, we would request a phonecall 01903 204141 to inform school of the absence and the reasons for it. We will still require the online form to be completed but understand other matters may need to take precedence, for example: an unexpected serious illness of a family member.

To make a request for an authorised absence, parents / carers must use the school's online form which is on the school's website.

[HOME > PARENTS > ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY > REQUEST FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE](#)

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.

3.1.4. Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



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 8:45 at the beginning of the school day.
- 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.

3.1.5. Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may take further action if concerns are significant.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

3.1.6. Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports. Where concerns over attendance arise, school will contact families outside set reporting times to discuss and understand barriers to attendance, providing clear actions and support as appropriate.

3.2. Authorised and unauthorised absence

3.2.1. Approval for term-time 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



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



- 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

3.2.2. Exceptional Circumstances

The school 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 school's discretion (decisions overseen by the deputy head teacher), including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Exceptional circumstances may include -

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see 6.3)
- serious or terminal illness of a close relative
- significant family trauma
- a major family event like a relatives wedding or a one-off never to repeated experience
- 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, bargees (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

These events are examples only and it is for the school to decide if they consider any request to be exceptional circumstances.

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



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



3.2.3. 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.

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.

3.3. Monitoring 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%& >50%	Persistent absence
Purple	<50%	Severe absence



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



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.

3.3.1. Using data to improve attendance

We 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

3.3.2. 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

3.3.2.1. Persistent Absence

Pupils whose attendance falls to a level of 90% or below are considered 'persistent absentees'. These pupils will be subject to specific action and their case discussed with the Educational Welfare Service where required.

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), we will work together with the local authority to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, we will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

3.3.2.2. Severe Absence

We will give particular focus to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. A concerted effort is therefore needed



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

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.

3.3.3. *Analysing Attendance Data*

- 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

3.3.4. *Monitoring Cycle*

Frequency	Action	Responsibility
Daily	Monitor daily absence and address any unexplained absence. Follow up with phone call – typically by 10am.	Attendance Admin Assistant
	Monitor absence list for targeted pupils - particularly persistent absentees and severe absentees (<75% & <90% if capacity allows). Communicate with families in line with agreed actions set.	Learning Mentor - Attendance
	All staff to monitor absence of vulnerable and targeted pupils to enable timely raising of concerns and possible action.	All staff – but especially class teachers, learning mentors & safeguarding team.
Weekly	Attendance data to enable promotion of the Attendance cup – weekly communication and assembly.	School office
Half-Termly	Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, data to identify patterns and trends (Bromcom). This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes and days of poor attendance.	Deputy Head Learning Mentor- Attendance
Termly	Analyse and evaluate attendance patterns and trends – individual <90%, groups of children i.e. disadvantaged. Use this information to deliver intervention and support	Deputy Head Learning Mentor- Attendance



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



	<p>in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the school to help school achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>Update attendance action by school for individual children – case studies available.</p> <p>Leadership to governors report –</p> <p>Number below <50%/ <75%/ 90% - number of open attendance cases – Action/ Action+/ Action ++</p> <p>Number of FPNs or referrals to PEI team.</p> <p>Benchmark attendance data (at whole school & year group level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.</p>	
Annually	<p>Conduct thorough analysis of annual data to identify patterns and trends (Bromcom). This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes and days of poor attendance. Analysis should inform whole school actions including those on the pupil premium strategy where appropriate.</p>	Deputy Head

4. Working Together – ACTION & SUPPORT

4.1. *Listen and Understand*

We understand that there are many factors which can impact on attendance. We will treat all pupils and parents with dignity and seek to develop respectful, positive relationships with families – these can be the foundation of good attendance.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic we will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, we will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

In communicating with parents, we will

- discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing
- challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good'



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



attendance looks like

- seek to provide a named person who is consistent support link to work with the family to improve attendance

4.2. Facilitate Support

Once the views of all partners have been understood, we will seek to implement the most effective and appropriate support. This is the voluntary support stage and is designed to help parents to understand and engage with the support and strategies in school; access services of their own accord and/or a voluntary whole family plan to tackle the barriers to attendance.

In the first instance, we will –

- Support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.
 - As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

There are many supportive strategies that school can use to help improve attendance. We expect families to engage fully with the Chesswood Team to communicate clear and positive messages to children, setting clear expectations, working positively together and celebrating improvements in attendance.

4.3. Formalise Support

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, providing wrap-around support, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, we will hold more formal conversations with the parents. This is likely to include the senior leader responsible for attendance and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team (once established).

These meetings will be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid significant consequences. They will clearly explain -

- The consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family
- The potential need for legal intervention in future

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with we will work with the local authority to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.

4.3.1. Part-time timetables

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision.

There will be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a parttime timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.

4.3.2. Parenting Contracts

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. A contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. It is not a punitive tool - it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.

There is no obligation on the school to offer a contract, and it may not be appropriate in every instance, but a contract should always be explored before moving forward to an education supervision order or prosecution. The aim from the outset should be for the parent(s), and the pupil where they are old enough, the school and the local authority to work in partnership.

Where we decide to use a parenting contract, a meeting will be arranged with the parent(s). The meeting will



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



- explain the purpose of a parenting contract and why using one would be beneficial in the family's circumstances
- Give opportunity for parent(s) to outline their views on the pupil's attendance at school, any underlying issues and how they believe these should be addressed. The meeting should also allow them to share their views on the idea of a parenting contract and what type of support they think would be helpful to secure the pupil's regular attendance.
- Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without good reason or notification, further attempts will be made to contact them and arrange another meeting but all attempts at support will be recorded.
- One parenting contract may be arranged with all parents, or in circumstances where it is desirable to have different requirements for each parent then separate parenting contracts for each parent may be arranged.

4.3.2.1. Parenting Contracts - Content

All parenting contracts should contain:

- Details of the requirements the parent(s) is expected to comply with.
- A statement from the school and/or local authority agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
- A statement by the parent that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.

The requirements specified, and the support provided, will depend on the individual case, and will be tailored to the needs of the individual parent and family. There is not, therefore, a prescribed list, but requirements may include:

- Measures to ensure the pupil attends school or alternative provision punctually and regularly
- Requiring the parent to attend meetings with the school and/or local authority
- Accessing or partaking in the support or programmes offered
- Working with or accessing other separate support provided to the pupil at school level (e.g. being on report)

The support provided to help the parent satisfy those requirements may include:

- Provision of a lead practitioner to support the family



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



- Signposting or referrals to wider local authority or health services that might support the family (e.g. housing needs, drug and alcohol support)
- Signposting or referrals to voluntary and community sector programmes or support (e.g. foodbanks or community support groups)
- Formal interventions such as family group conferencing, pastoral interventions or homework groups
- Support and advisory services (e.g. benefit support)
- Formal parenting programmes (e.g. a course with a specified number of sessions)

Parenting contracts do not have a minimum or maximum duration. Each individual contract will set out the duration it will be in place, and most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed. Once the requirements and support elements of the contract have been agreed, the school and the parent will write up the contract together and sign it. All parties, including other partners working with the family, should be given a copy.

4.3.2.2. Non-compliance with a parenting contract

Where a parent does not comply with the requirements set out in the contract, the lead practitioner will contact the parent and seek an explanation and decide whether it is reasonable, and the contract remains useful. If the explanation shows that the contract is proving difficult to comply with through no fault of the parent, then a meeting should be arranged with the parent to review and amend it. Where no explanation is given, or the lead practitioner is not satisfied with the explanation, they will serve the parent with a warning to explain that the contract is not working and may be terminated, and another course of action pursued, if the parent does not engage. This will be in the form of a letter and email, and record of it will be kept.

If there are further instances of non-compliance, they will arrange a meeting with the parent to review the contract and discuss how it can be made to work. Following this meeting, the school and/or local authority will decide whether the noncompliance is undermining the contract to the extent that it is no longer useful in which case an alternative course of action (such as a different legal intervention) will be decided upon. The decision and reasons will be recorded.

Failure by the parent, school, or local authority to keep to the terms of the parenting contract cannot lead to action for breach of contract or for civil damages. There is no criminal sanction for a parent's failure to comply with, or refusal to sign, a parenting contract. If the pupil's irregular attendance continues or escalates to the point where prosecution is deemed appropriate, however, any failure or refusal may be presented as evidence in the case. It is therefore important



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



that any non-compliance with the contract is recorded so that it can be presented in court if necessary.

4.3.3. Education Supervision Orders

Where a voluntary early help plan, or formal parenting contract has not been successful, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) can be a useful alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. In deciding whether to progress to an ESO, the school and local authority will have exhausted voluntary support and be clear that making the order would be beneficial for the pupil and parent. Where safeguarding concerns exist, the lead practitioner will also discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and children's social care services and agree an ESO would be a more suitable option than a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan. In all cases, we will fully consider using an ESO before moving forward to prosecution.

ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. For the duration of the ESO, the parent's duties to secure the child's education and regular attendance are superseded by a duty to comply with any directions given by the local authority under the ESO. The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

4.3.3.1. Education Supervision Orders – Contents

If it is decided to progress with an ESO, the local authority will notify parents in writing of the intention to consider an ESO and set up a meeting to discuss with the parent. Following the conversation, the local authority will make its decision and inform the parent and pupil of whether the case will be taken forward to court or not. Where the decision is to proceed, this can be combined with the service of an application notice. Once an ESO is secured, an officer of the local authority will be chosen to act as the supervisor of the order on the authority's behalf; this does not need to be an attendance officer, rather it should be whichever lead practitioner is working with the family (including their social worker where appropriate). School will work in partnership with the local authority and whilst the designated supervisor (the local authority) retains overall responsibility, school will provide support and supervision where appropriate.

The supervisor must determine any directions (requirements the parent must adhere to) to give whilst the order is in force. There is not a prescribed list, but they may include:



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



- Requiring the parent(s) to attend support meetings
- Requiring the parent(s) to attend a parenting programme or counselling
- Requiring the parent(s) to access support services
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.

Review meetings involving all parties (including the school) will be held every 3 months throughout the period the ESO is in force. At these meetings, any actions and directions should be discussed and added or amended.

4.3.3.2. Non-compliance with an ESO

Where parents persistently fail to comply with the directions given under the ESO, they may be guilty of an offence. Local authorities can prosecute in the Magistrates Court for persistent non-compliance with the Order and parents (upon conviction) will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000. The lead officer should also raise persistent failure to comply with children's social care services and work together to investigate the circumstances of the pupil and decide whether it is appropriate for any further action to be taken (including statutory social care involvement) to secure their welfare.

4.4. Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will seek to enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

This could take the form of -

- Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.
- In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, all parties should work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

4.4.1. Attendance Prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation. Local authorities' power to prosecute is laid out in paragraph 118 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#).

The decision to prosecute rests solely with the LA as an independent prosecuting authority, but in deciding whether to prosecute the local authority will consider all actions taken by the school in seeking to improve attendance.

4.4.2. Parenting Orders

Parenting orders are an ancillary order that can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and/or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would help change parental behaviour.

4.4.3. Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices are served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Fixed penalty notices can be used by school where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance. Fixed penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where a fixed penalty notice is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

Fixed penalty notices must be issued in line with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and can only be issued by the headteacher or someone authorised by them (deputy head), a local authority officer or the police. School will send copies of fixed penalty notices issued to the local authority.

Fixed penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents will be notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

[West Sussex Local Authority has a Code of Conduct](#) for issuing fixed penalty notices which must be adhered to by all schools.

4.4.3.1. Payment of penalties

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority regardless of who issued the penalty notice.

If the penalty is not paid by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority must decide either to prosecute for the original offence to which the notice applies, or withdraw the notice. Parent(s) can only be prosecuted if 28 days have expired, and full payment has not been made. There is no right of appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice. Monies collected through fixed penalty notices can only be used for the administration of the fixed penalty notice system or for prosecuting for the original offence in cases of non-payment. Any surplus at the end of the year must be returned to the Secretary of State.

5. Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform us, as soon as possible, using the '[Request Removal from School Roll](#)' form on the school website.

[HOME > PARENTS > ADMISSIONS AND TRANSITIONS > REQUEST REMOVAL FROM SCHOOL ROLL](#)

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;



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



- 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.



Chesswood Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Appendices

Attendance Codes

Present

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present am	Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as present for statistical purposes.
\	Present pm	
L	Late arrival	Schools should actively discourage late arrival and be alert to patterns of late arrival. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and depending on the structure of the school day not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that it is more appropriate.

Authorised Absence

Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Leave of absence granted by the school	Only exceptional circumstances warrant granting a leave of absence. Wherever referred to in this guidance a leave of absence should not be, and from certain types of school must not be, granted unless it has been applied for in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with and the headteacher believes the circumstances to be exceptional. Schools must consider each application for a leave of



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



		<p>absence individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.</p> <p>Specific leave of absence may also be granted where :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pupil is participating in a performance• A pupil is subject to a temporary part-time timetable
H	leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school	<p>Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable. An application for leave of absence should not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstance of the case which justify the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.</p>
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made	<p>If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are suspended from school or excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register.</p> <p>When a pupil of compulsory school age is suspended or permanently excluded from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, academy, city technology college, or city college for the technology of the arts, alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive day of any suspension or exclusion. Where alternative provision is made schools should record this using the appropriate code for attending an</p>



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



		approved educational activity.
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	<p>Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools must record absences as authorised where pupils cannot attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).</p> <p>In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern. Schools should not routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily as it places additional pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointments system particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional. Only where the school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence.</p> <p>Pupils with long term illness or other health needs may need additional support to continue education, such as alternative provision arranged by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. This applies whether or not the child is registered at a school and whatever type of school they attend. The education must be full-time or as close to full-time as the child's health allows. DfE's statutory guidance on ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs sets out that local authorities should provide education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. Local authorities should have a named officer responsible for the education of children with additional health needs.</p>



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



M	Medical or dental appointment	<p>Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours.</p> <p>Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.</p> <p>If a pupil is present at registration but has a medical appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session.</p>
R		<p>Schools must record absence as authorised when it falls on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the parents' religious body (not the parents).</p> <p>As a general rule, we would interpret 'a day exclusively set apart for religious observance' as a day when the pupil's parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion. If in doubt, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.</p> <p>If a religious body sets apart a single day for a religious observance and the parent applies for more than one day, the school may only record one day as authorised on this basis; the rest of the request would be a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C. Schools and local authorities may seek to minimise the adverse effects of religious observance on a pupil's attendance and attainment by considering approaches such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting term dates around days for religious observance;• Working with local faith groups to develop guidance on



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



		<p>absence for religious observance; • Schools taking INSET days that coincide with religious observance days; and • Providing individual support for pupils who miss sessions on days exclusively set apart for religious observance.</p>
T	Traveller absence	<p>A number of different groups are covered by the generic term traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.</p> <p>This code should not be used for general absences by those groups. It must only be used when the pupil's parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes and the school has granted a leave of absence following a request from the parent. This code should not be used to record any other types of absence by these groups.</p> <p>Pupils from these groups whose parent(s) do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to attend school as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other pupils in terms of the requirements to attend school regularly once registered at a school.</p> <p>Where a pupil has no fixed abode because their parent(s) is engaged in a business or trade that requires them to travel, there is an expectation that the pupil attends at least 200 sessions per year. The pupil must attend school as regularly as the business permits and therefore, if the business or trade permits the pupil to attend for more than 200 sessions per year, they should do so.</p> <p>To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes, it is expected that the pupil should attend school elsewhere when their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.</p>



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a pupil's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised in regulation 6(2) or where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established.

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school	<p>Where the school has not granted a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away longer than the period of leave granted.</p> <p>A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not (and from certain types of school cannot) be granted.</p>
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	<p>Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner.</p> <p>Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has been established the school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant code.</p> <p>Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 working days after the session. Code N should not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established after 5 working days, schools should amend</p>



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



		the pupil's record to Code O.
O	Absent without authorisation	Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is an authorised absence.
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	<p>Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed and the school is not satisfied that the reason for lateness is an authorised absence.</p> <p>Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and depending on the structure of the school day not longer than either 30 minutes after the session begins, or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place.</p>

Attending an approved educational activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is attending another school at which they are registered or taking part in off-site activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or unregistered alternative provision.

Pupils can only be recorded as attending an off-site activity if it is approved by the school, of an educational nature and supervised by someone authorised by the school. Ultimately, school are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils taking part in an off-site educational activity so it would be reasonable to expect that the school would only authorise someone who was answerable to the school to supervise an activity.

The activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded and for pupils of compulsory school age the school must record the nature of the activity.

Code	Definition	Scenario
D	Dual registered at another school	The law allows for a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



		<p>expected to attend the school in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis.</p> <p>Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absence are promptly followed up.</p>
B	Off-site educational Activity	<p>Attending an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.</p> <p>For pupils of compulsory school age, schools must also record the nature of the activity, examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• attending taster days at other schools;• attending courses at college;• attending unregistered alternative provision arranged or agreed by the school. <p>The educational activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.</p> <p>Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised, and measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.</p> <p>This code must not be used for any unsupervised educational activity i.e., when a pupil is at home doing some schoolwork.</p>



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment	<p>Attending an interview with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education, or transfer to another school.</p> <p>This must take place during the session for which it is recorded.</p>
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity	<p>Taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school. If schools have concerns about the appropriateness of an activity, they can seek advice from the sports' national governing body. However, the final decision on approving the activity rests with the school and they should take the effect on the pupil's general education into account. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.</p> <p>Approved educational activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the sporting activity notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.</p>
V	Educational visit or trip	<p>Attendance at an organised visit or trip, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.</p> <p>The educational visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded.</p> <p>Approved educational activity must be supervised by a person authorised by the school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the organiser of the visit or trip notifies the school of any absence by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the</p>



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



		relevant absence code.
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Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Code	Definition	Scenario
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	<p>Where a pupil is unable to attend school because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the school site or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend; or• the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within safe walking distance; or• a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school. <p>Schools must also record the nature of the circumstances in which a pupil is unable to attend school.</p> <p>Walking distance</p> <p>In relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3 miles. In each case measured by the nearest available safe route.</p>

Administrative Codes

Unauthorised absence is where a pupil's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised in regulation 6(2) or where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established.

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be	<p>Where a pupil not of compulsory school age is attending school part-time.</p> <p>270. For example, where parents have chosen for their 4</p>



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



	in school	year-old child to attend parttime until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age.
Z		<p>To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.</p> <p>Schools must enter a pupil's name on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.</p> <p>In the normal admissions round, when parents have accepted the school place offered, the local authority can inform schools on behalf of the parents and notify the school when the parent has agreed that the pupil will attend school. This can also be the case where the local authority co-ordinates in-year applications for school places.</p> <p>If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed starting day, the school must establish the reason and record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.</p>
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	<p>Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• days between terms;• half terms;• occasional days (for example, bank holidays);• weekends (where it is required by the management information system);• up to 5 non-educational days; and• use of school as a polling station. <p>Partial school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'staggered starts' or 'induction days' where different



Chesswood Junior School Attendance and Punctuality Policy



		<p>term dates have been agreed for different year groups - this code is used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of part of the school as a polling station.