



# CHAILEY SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

Date of Governing Body's Approval: March 2020

Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read 'Judith M...'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Head Teacher:

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read 'Adele Key'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Date Due for Review: March 2022

## **Introduction**

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. This policy reflects the aims of Chailey School by encouraging students to maximise their learning experience in order that all reach their full potential, providing clear procedures for involving parents/carers, students and other relevant agencies relating to attendance.

### **The Aims of this Policy are to:**

- To safeguard our students by ensuring they are in school, or their whereabouts is known and authorised
- To improve the overall attendance rate of our students. This is done in two ways:
  - Making the procedures of registration and monitoring of attendance accurate and efficient
  - Creating a culture whereby good attendance and punctuality are valued and promoted by parents/carers, teachers and students.
- To support those students whose non-attendance is for serious reasons of illness, either physical or psychological

We expect all students to come to school every day. Evidence shows that the biggest threat to progress is poor attendance.

Students who attend school consistently are more likely to achieve their potential, have fulfilling and stable friendships and, therefore, feel happy and secure. Similarly, student-teacher relationships benefit from continuity and learning is more effective when students can build on, and follow, an incremental curriculum as planned and delivered by their teachers.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

We ask that medical/dental appointments are made outside of school time if possible, although we do realise that sometimes these are beyond parents/carers immediate control.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents/carers), as either authorised or unauthorised: authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause; unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable.

These may include: parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or for a holiday; truancy during the school day; absences which have never been properly explained; children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be resolved, the school may refer the child to the 'Education Support Behaviour and Attendance Support Service (ESBAS). ESBAS will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this service can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

## Responsibilities

The school operates a computerised registration system. Absences are coded according to DFE and CSA policies. Teachers must take the register accurately or risk disciplinary action. We work alongside, and in constant communication with ESBAS and we are required to send attendance statistics to the DFE and CSA every term. All staff, through their own behaviour, must promote a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality.

The school has an Attendance Officer to monitor and track attendance who works closely with the Student Support Managers, Key Stage Directors and the Deputy Head Teacher to improve attendance.

A medical certificate will be required if your child/children are absent for more than 5 days.

## Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

A parent should leave a message on the school absence line with a reason for their child's absence on **01273 890407** before 9.00am (this is a 24 hour line). Truancy call and texts are sent out each day to alert parents if their child is not in school and no absence message has been left.

## Holidays

Chailey School discourages parents/carers to take their child out of school during term dates. The Head Teacher will not authorise holidays in school time unless in exceptional circumstances. In the case of an unauthorised holiday, ESBAS will be notified of the holiday taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that such a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to

£120 if not paid within the first 28 days but within 21 days of receipt of the Notice. Thereafter, if the Penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action. **All monies received through fines from parents/carers are paid direct to the local authority. The school receives no financial gain from any penalty notices.**

However, if there are exceptional circumstances, a supporting letter must be written to the Head Teacher who may choose to authorise the holiday. Any parent/carer wishing to take their child on holiday in term time must complete a holiday form which can be downloaded from the website.

The East Sussex rules regarding taking holidays in term time are very clear and we as a school follow them closely.

Consequently, if you book your child out of school for a holiday of less than 5 days and subsequently your child is off sick before the holiday is due to start or has extra days off after the holiday is due to finish we will be asking you for a copy of your holiday booking or a Doctors certificate, to confirm either your holiday dates or your child's sickness. Failure to produce this evidence will result in the School referring you to the Local Authority for a penalty notice.

As you know, an absence from school for 5 days or more will incur a referral for a Penalty Notice, imposed by the Local Authority, of £60 per child, per parent.

## Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive in school at 8.35am. The morning registration is at 8.40am and the afternoon registration is at 2:00pm. If students are late in the morning they will need to sign in at the main office.

## **Attendance Procedures**

The school's attendance target is 96% and in order to meet this target the following system is in place:

- The school rewards students for good attendance in the following manner:
  - Fortnightly attendance rewards for individual students and tutor groups
  - Regular reward assemblies with certificates awarded for outstanding attendance
- Percentage Attendance information is included on regular progress reports
- When requested by the school, parents/carers must provide medical evidence as proof of absence. If this is not provided, the absence will be classed as unauthorised
- If the child's attendance is 90% or lower, or they have 10 unauthorised absences, they may be referred to ESBAS or our Welfare Officer
- If there are serious concerns, parents/carers will be contacted directly and may be asked to be present at an Attendance meeting, especially if their child's attendance is below 90%.

## **Education Welfare Officer**

Chailey School employs an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) on one day a week to support welfare issues. The EWO and Attendance Officer work to ensure good attendance. This includes home visits as part of the school's duty of care to its students and to support resolving welfare and attendance issues.

The school has a legal duty to publish its attendance figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. Members of school staff are committed to working with parents/carers to ensure the highest level of attendance possible.



**ABSENCE REQUEST DURING TERM TIME**  
**NOTICE TO PARENTS/CARERS**

Dear Parents/Carers

The Department for Education has amended the regulations and guidance in relation to absence in term time. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time.

From 1st September 2013, government legislation no longer allows head teachers to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school unless there are considered to be exceptional circumstances.

In determining whether or not an absence in such circumstances can be authorised, it is for the Head Teacher to determine the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. If you consider that your request falls into this category you will need to complete the attached form. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with County Council guidance.

Therefore, in the case of an unauthorised absence the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service will be notified and a Penalty Notice may be issued. Please note that Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60.00 which increases to £120.00 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this will result in further legal intervention.

All absence requests must be completed on the form below and this should be returned to the school a minimum of 14 days before the start of the absence.

Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider some absences to be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their classmates receive. Children returning from an absence are unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other students in the class. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

I hope you understand and support our efforts to secure high levels of attendance in line with statutory requirements and the aspirations we share with you for the highest possible attainment and progress for your son/daughter.

Yours sincerely

Helen Key  
Head Teacher



**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

If, after reading the attached letter, you consider you have exceptional circumstances to request a leave of absence during term time, please complete this form and return to the Head Teacher at least 14 days before you wish to remove your child from school.

Pupil Name ..... TutorGroup .....

Home Address .....

.....

First day of absence ..... Date of return to school .....

Total number of days missed .....

Exceptional circumstance are as follows:-

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

I understand that if the request is unauthorised the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service will be notified of the absence taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60.00 which increases to £120.00 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that if I do not pay, this will result in legal action.

Name of parent/carer making application .....

Signed ..... Dated .....

**(Please ensure you are giving at least 14 days' notice of the proposed absence)**

.....

Pupil Name ..... Tutor Group .....

AUTHORISED: Your request has been authorised for the following dates: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

UNAUTHORISED: Your request has been unauthorised for the following dates: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Signed ..... Head Teacher      Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_