Chevening (St Botolph's) CE Primary School

Attendance policy

Approved by:	Steering Committee	Date: 18.05.23
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Contents

In line with our Biblical Vision (Matthew 13: 31-32),

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

this policy has been developed being mindful of our aim to provide an excellent education and to

- Be true to Christ and His teachings.
- Be known for kind and thoughtful actions and attitudes.
- Be inclusive in serving, sharing and showing God's love to benefit all.

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:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school, lessons, internal and external activities and opportunities.

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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

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, cohorts and groups of children

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Safeguarding Governor has responsibility for overseeing school attendance matters.

3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Headteacher and School Office Manager

The Headteacher and School Office Manager share responsibility for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Promote 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, e.g. Early Help

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 The School Office Manager and Receptionist

The School Office Manager and Receptionist are responsible for:

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)

> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher, SLT and class teachers

> Working with Early Help/ Kent PIAS (PRU Inclusion & Attendance Service) or education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

> Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9am and 1.5pm (KS1)/1.35pm (KS2).

3.6 School Office Manager and Receptionist

School Office staff will:

> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

> Transfer calls from parents to the class teacher/Head Teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the first day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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:

> 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 **by 8.45am** each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until **9.05am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **1.05pm (KS1) and 1.35pm (KS2).**

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the School Office on 01732 452895 (see also section 7).

Absence due to illness is classified as authorized, 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/carer 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.

4.3 Planned absence

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.

Parents/carers should inform the School Office about medical appointments verbally, by telephone (01732 452895) or by email (reception@chevening.kent.sch.uk)

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. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed **(before 9.05am; 1.05pm KS1/ 1.35pm KS2)** will be marked as late, using the appropriate code L

> After the register has closed **(after 9.05am; 1.05pm KS1/ 1.35pm KS2)** will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code U –this counts as an unauthorized absence.

> Must enter school by the main entrance, with their parent/carer and report to the School Office where their name and the reason for lateness will be recorded.

> Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

4.5 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, as this is a safeguarding concern. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency

contacts, the school may attempt contact via email/alternative means, make a home visit, or contact a sibling's school.

> 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 relevant next steps, which could include informing PIAS or Early Help.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

School attendance information is shared via the weekly Newsletter, which focuses on class and whole-school attendance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels in termly reports.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable', this implies an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the School Office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> **Illness and medical/dental appointments** lasting more than half a day (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> **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

> Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

> Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

> The death or terminal illness of a close family member.

> To attend a wedding or funeral of a close family member.

> Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

The following reasons will **NOT** be considered for authorised absence:

- Persistent non-specific illness (e.g. 'poorly/unwell')
- Absence of siblings if one child is absent
- Over-sleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates/times
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day, without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holiday

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.

- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

5.2 Legal sanctions

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

If issued with a fine, or Penalty Notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police, **in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.**

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to good learning, good academic progress and social development, as well as successful and fulfilling school experience.

7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored on a daily basis by the School Office and absences are reported to the Head Teacher and noted in the class registers.

- 95 - 100% attendance – the class teacher/School Office investigate and notify Headteacher of concerns.
  The School Office Manager or Headteacher to contact parent if appropriate.
- 90 - 95% attendance – monitoring is on a weekly basis and may trigger school intervention letters/meeting with parents.
- Where attendance drops below 90% or the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school continues to monitor on a weekly basis, liaise with parents/carers and, if necessary, will make a referral to the KCC PIAS.
  If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.

- For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make a referral to Early Help.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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/carers 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

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Governing Board's Steering Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:
- Child protection Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Home-School Agreement

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed (9.05am)
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day