



Attendance Policy

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community and the Local Authority Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

Aims:

- To improve the quality of school life
- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

Objectives:

- To involve the children or young people more in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular school attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people's attendance
- To recognise the important role of class teachers and/or learning mentors in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the aims and objectives to be met
- Effective working relationship with Local Authority Service, and the reporting of half-termly figures to the service

Targets:

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To discuss the setting of targets for the school with the Local Authority Officer and any School Improvement Partners
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the LA Officer
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these where appropriate
- To target resources in order to improve attendance and implement strategies where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors and the Local Authority informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which have been set for all children including the most vulnerable groups, such as Children in care, pupil premium and children with SEN.

Procedure

- Children or young people are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
 - - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
 - - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s) or carers will provide an explanation if the child or young person is absent on every day the absence occurs, at the start of the school day.
- If contact, explaining the child or young person's absence, fails to be made by parent(s) or carer/s, then the school will attempt to contact the home.
 - The head teacher and the Learning Mentor will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and the impact that absences have upon learning.
 - Children or young people with 99% and 100% attendance each half term will be rewarded by the school by receiving a certificate and 100% half termly attendance will be rewarded with a prize. 100% annual attendance will be rewarded with a small gift.
 - Weekly attendance rewards are given during weekly assemblies for the highest attendance and additional rewards of extra playtimes/free time are given to classes with 100% weekly attendance.
 - A half-termly bike raffle will be held. All pupils who arrive in school on time every day will be given a raffle ticket on a Friday to be entered into the draw. There are three prizes per half term, the bike or equivalent for first prize, and then £20 and £10 vouchers for the runners up.

Identification & Referral

- Identification is made by the class teacher and/or Learning Mentor (cause for concern) and daily phone calls are made to try and identify a reason for absence or support families with attending school, where necessary.
- Concerns are passed to the Learning Mentor who will contact the family by letter after 2 days absence to ascertain a reason for absence. If we are unable to make contact after 2 days and/or have concerns regarding the welfare/whereabouts of the children we will make immediate contact with Local Authority and report the children as missing from education.
- Weekly and Monthly monitoring will then be carried out to monitor punctuality and to look for re-occurring patterns in absence and persistent absence and lateness. A letter will be sent to parents that week for persistent absence or lateness.
- Weekly monitoring includes punctuality and broken weeks and attendance less than the expected 95%. A letter is sent to parents with consultation with the Head teacher for attendance less than 90% and for persistent lateness and attendance concerns are addressed by letter.
- A panel meeting will then be arranged between the EWO and school to try to improve attendance on a monthly basis to support families and look at ways to improve attendance and punctuality
- Monthly monitoring includes vulnerable groups such as those registered for Free School Meals, or on the SEN register, or where there is a TAF, CIN plan or CP plan in place, or where children are classed as Looked After. Concerns for pupils in these groups will be raised with the appropriate member of staff (e.g. the SENCO, Learning Mentor or Head teacher).
- School has a very close relationship with the Local Authority and monthly consultation sessions are planned and identified families are invited to attend the next panel meeting.
- If there is no significant improvement, a formal referral to the Local Authority Service will be made and they will then work with the family to support improvements where absence reaches 85%.

Completing the Register

- Registers provide the twice daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school

- The register should be marked using the codes advised by the local authority Cheshire West and Chester Council

Lateness

Pupils who are late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.

School learning begins at 8:50am and all pupils are expected to be in school ready for registration at this time. All registers are taken at 8.50am and returned to the office. Any pupils arriving between 8.50 and 9.20 will be marked L. After 9.20am the late mark will become an unauthorised absence.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken. Where a child incurs 10 unauthorised absence marks (2 per day) a fixed penalty notice may be issued. If issued, a penalty of £60 per parent is payable within 21 days of issue. If unpaid this will increase to £120 to be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in the Local Authority instigating legal proceedings where parents/carers may face a fine of up to £2,500.

Pupils who are late for school miss important learning. Key skills are taught at the beginning of the day and these include reading, handwriting and similar activities. Children who arrive late to school are often uncomfortable coming into an operational class and this has a negative impact upon their self confidence. Their lateness also disrupts the class teacher and the other pupils.

Pupils returned to school by Truancy Patrols

The school will have in place a procedure for pupils who are returned or stopped by a truancy patrol.

Leave of absence during term time

Family Holidays are no longer able to be agreed during term time and parents are strongly encouraged to take holidays during school holidays. Families who continue to take their children out of school for a family holiday may be issued with a fixed penalty fine of £60 per child per parent, payable within 21 days of issue. If unpaid this will increase to £120 to be paid within 28 days. Holidays taken during term time will be recorded in the registers with a code G. If parent(s)/carer(s) make the school aware of the intention to take the children out of school for a holiday, the head teacher will consider whether there are exceptional circumstances necessitating this leave of absence. The head teacher or learning mentor will then write to the parent(s)/carer(s) to notify them of the decision. If a parent/carers requests a leave of absence during term time which is declined, and the child is subsequently absent in circumstances which suggest that the leave was taken despite the lack of consent, the absence will be recorded as an Unauthorised Absence and a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. Where both parents have responsibility for their child, each parent will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. The definition of "parent" includes all natural parents, whether they are married or not; and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person. If a parent has parental responsibility but no day to day care consideration will be given as to the degree of their compliance in the holiday. Parents without day-to-day care may not be aware of the holiday until the last minute as they may not have regular contact with the child. If school is not made aware of the intention to take a holiday and children are absent from school, phone calls and a letter advising that we are trying to contact you will be sent due to the absence becoming a safeguarding issue. A personal letter will be sent advising that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued and also inviting parents or carers into school to discuss the reasons for their absence.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Where a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, the amount of the penalty is £60 per parent/carers if paid within 21 days. If the payment is after 21 days but within the maximum 28 days the penalty payment is £120 per parent/carers. Parent/carers do not receive reminders requesting payment. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child's attendance at the school at which they are registered, where that absence is not authorised by the school. Therefore if the Fixed Penalty Notice is paid within the time limits above no further action will be taken in connection with the offence. If the fixed penalty notice remains unpaid the file is passed to the Authorities Legal Services and the parent/carers could get prosecuted in the magistrate's court. The Government has recently brought in a Criminal Court Charge of £150 for adults prosecuted in the Magistrates Court. This charge is payable in addition to any penalty (e.g. costs, victim surcharge).

What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child or young person is absent
- Reinforce to your child the importance of attending school
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Be punctual
- Work with support offered of learning mentor and LA to help raise attendance and punctuality

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple
- Talk to the classteacher, Learning Mentor or the headteacher at the school
- Talk to the Local Authority Service

You may contact the Local Authority Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation.

The school aims to have ALL children or young people attending regularly and punctually and parent(s)/carer(s) need to know that should their child fail to attend in this way then the matter will be referred to the Local Authority Service.

Parent(s)/carer(s) need to be aware that Cheshire West and Cheshire Schools are operating the Fast Track Prosecution System in co-operation with the Local Authority Service.

Policy updated April 2015

Written by Tracy Webb

Due for renewal April 2018