

# Chalk Ridge Primary School

## Attendance Policy



Reviewed and approved by Full Governing Body Committee

Last reviewed March 2024. Next review – March 2025

Headteacher: Miss Sue Jackson

*This policy follows the national guidance*

### **National guidance**

Working together to improve school attendance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1073619/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf)

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1101498/Suspension\\_and\\_Permanent\\_Exclusion\\_from\\_maintained\\_schools\\_academies\\_and\\_pupil\\_referral\\_units\\_in\\_England\\_including\\_pupil\\_movement.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1101498/Suspension_and_Permanent_Exclusion_from_maintained_schools_academies_and_pupil_referral_units_in_England_including_pupil_movement.pdf)

Children missing in Education

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children\\_Missing\\_Education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

### **Rationale/statement of intent**

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled.

Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents and carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital that children are at school, on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, well developed social, emotional and mental health and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of the guidance below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that all pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that all pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school.

## **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education and employment or training.

## **Promoting Good Attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home/School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is, and how this relates to their attainment
- promote positive attendance messages and provide information on all matters related to attendance on our weekly newsletter
- contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (Attendance Champion - Mrs Baskerville) will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will ensure that attendance is both recorded and analysed and issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Daily and frequent monitoring of pupils will be delegated to the Attendance Officer (AO). The Attendance Officer may also contact parents. The Attendance Officer and office team will work closely together to monitor and identify poor attendance and/or punctuality, and seek support from the Senior Leadership Team where necessary. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

## **Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:**

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns/underlying problems that may account for a child's absence, and record on CPOMS.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.
- Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.

## **Responsibilities of Pupils:**

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.

## **Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

A child's regular attendance at school is a parent's/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

## **Parents/Carers will:**

- Inform the school, as early as possible, on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.

- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by email if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

## **Recording Attendance**

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 8.50am and again for the afternoon session at 1pm. Should a child arrive late to school, the parent/carer will need to use the school electronic signing in system, recording the name of the child, date and time of arrival, reason for lateness and name of adult signing in the child.

## **Lateness/Punctuality**

It is important to be on time every day. The start of school lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work, miss time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and can be embarrassing, which may possibly lead to further absence.

- The school gates open at 8.30am. Pupils enter the school building from 8.40am. All external doors/gates are closed at 8.50am.
- The school day begins at 8.50am and all pupils are expected to be in school by this time. Morning registration is at 8.50am.
- All lateness is recorded daily.
- A child arriving after registration at 8.50am and before 9.10am, will be marked 'late'.
- If a child arrives late, a reason must be given and this will be recorded.
- Arrival after 9.10am will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with County and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence and therefore affects their attendance percentage.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

## **What happens if you are persistently late?**

Pupils who are persistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action (see section 6 for further detail).

Parents or Carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness in any 100-day period, the school or Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance. (See section 6 of this policy for further detail).

## **At the end of the day**

Please collect your child promptly at 3.10pm at the end of the school day. The school gates open at 3.00pm. Pupils leave the school building at 3.10pm. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies. If one is available, the school will place a child into the after-school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

## **What you should do if your child is absent**

### **First Day Absence**

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent:

- Parents/Carers must notify the school if their child is going to be absent/late. This message can be telephoned to the school office (an answerphone message can be left at any time), the Parent/carer can come in person, or a note can be emailed to school.
- Contact number: 01256 461733
- Email contact: [adminoffice@chalkridgepri.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@chalkridgepri.hants.sch.uk)

If your child is absent:

- The Attendance Officer will text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If you do not contact the school after receiving the text message then the Attendance Officer will continue to telephone until a response has been received.
- We may invite the Parent/carer in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and Attendance Champion if absences persist.
- We will refer the matter to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and becomes significant.
- Once the reason for absence has been obtained by the Attendance Officer, this information will be recorded on the register using Arbor.

### **Third Day Absence**

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parents/carers after three days of absence, the school is required to start 'a child missing in education procedure' as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents including making enquires to known friends and wider family.

### **Ten Day's Absence**

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Please ensure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **Continued or Ongoing Absence**

If your child misses 10% or more of school (equivalent of one day or more a fortnight across a full school year) they are defined as persistent absentees. The school and local authority will work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If a child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90%, this will be closely monitored.

### **Request for Leave of Absence**

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013. Pupil Registration England regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.

Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in a 'Request to Authorise Absence from School' form available from the school office at least ten school days in advance and before making any travel arrangements. Once the form has been received in the school office, this will be passed to the Headteacher and will be returned to the parent/carer within 5 school days. This will be via email and a paper copy of the form will be sent home with the child. In the case of needing leave in an emergency please contact a Senior Leader to discuss.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance with the Code of Conduct (see section 6 for details). Taking holiday in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to not take children out during school time.

### **Understanding types of absence**

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- Unauthorised Absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's Leave of Absence from School, after a parent's request. This includes:
  - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
  - truancy before or during the school day
  - absences which have not been explained

Unauthorised Absence will be recorded in the register using code U (arrived in school after registration has closed at 9.10am) or L (late arrival before the register closes at 08.50am). A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

### **Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance and other Legal Measures**

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child (of compulsory school age) at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

### **Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness**

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and

- the child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
- the child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents/carers are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting Contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Attendance prosecution

Where a child has unauthorised absence, the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

A copy of the Code of Conduct is available from [penalty-notice-unauthorised-absence-school-march2020.docx \(live.com\)](https://www.hampshire.gov.uk/media/1000000/penalty-notice-unauthorised-absence-school-march2020.docx)

The Code of Conduct states that schools or Hampshire Local Authority will issue a penalty notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes G, U or O on the register)
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed

- persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a penalty notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

### **Legal Measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence**

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. non-approval of a parent/carers request for leave of absence or
2. a holiday that has been taken without permission

and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions, then a penalty notice for non-attendance may be issued.

If a child has other types of unauthorised absence (coded O and U) and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. 10 sessions (five days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/10-week school period.
2. One or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.

Parents/carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the Leave of Absence Request Form, or through the schools attendance policy and website. The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence, the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a penalty notice is issued to **one or more parent/carers** for each child. N.B This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one penalty notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the penalty notice. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing penalty notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note if you pay the penalty notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a penalty notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can view a leaflet on the school's website or visit Hampshire County Councils website at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

### **Parenting Contracts**

#### **Purpose of parenting contracts and when they may be appropriate**

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or the local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. A contract is not legally binding but it allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary Early Help Hub plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate. A parenting contract 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.



## **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 where it is reasonable, and if the contract remains useful. If the contract is difficult to comply with through no fault of the parent/carer, a meeting will be arranged to review and amend it. Where no explanation is given the parent/carer will receive a warning to explain that the contract is not working and may be terminated and another course of action pursued.

## **What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

## **My child is trying to avoid coming to school, what should I do?**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents 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.

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

## **Leavers**

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents/carers are asked to give the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'child missing in education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

## **Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or TV work & modelling**

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

National Advice – <https://www.gov.uk/child-performance-licence-england-scotland-wales>

## **Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport**

Parents/carers of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and

are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

### **Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families**

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

For further advice and guidance on attendance and Shand Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families see Hampshire County Council guidance at:

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-section6.pdf>

Further support and guidance is available from Hampshire' County Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS)

### **Record preservation**

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

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| <b>Other linked policies:</b>                                |
| Behaviour Policy   |
| Anti Bullying Policy   |
| Teaching and Learning Policy                                 |
| <b>We can check that this is working by:</b>                 |
| Monitoring attendance and lateness figures                   |
| Discussion with staff, parents and children about attendance |