



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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1. The Importance of Attendance

Chase High School (CHS) believes in developing good patterns of attendance and sets high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils from the outset. It is a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and daily life and the school recognises the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

In May 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) updated its guidance [Improving School Attendance: Support for Schools and Local Authorities](#). This guidance has been used to develop this Policy.

2. Aims

CHS is committed to providing an effective and efficient education for all pupils. The school ensures that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance, and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. The school aims to achieve 100% attendance to afford all pupils the best opportunity to fulfill their potential.

3. The Law

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that “failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil” is an offence. Sub-clause (1) states “If a child of compulsory age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.” Sub-clause (1A) states that “If.....the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails.....to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence.”
- Failure to carry out this duty can lead to significant fines and/or imprisonment.
- CHS is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Only if CHS is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered, is the absence authorised.

4. Absences

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence for their child before this can be authorised), a medical or dental appointment, which unavoidably falls in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no ‘leave’ has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school making a referral to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes (this list is neither definitive nor exhaustive):

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences, which have never been properly explained;
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents/carers to medical appointments;
- Their own or family birthdays;
- Whilst waiting for a parental meeting;

Holidays during term time without 'leave', and not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Headteacher (HT) may result in CHS applying to the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice. If a parent/carer has previously been issued a penalty notice, CHS may request a direct prosecution by the Local Authority.

5. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any pupil's education and CHS needs the full support and cooperation of parents/carers to resolve this.

6. Children Missing in Education (CME)

If a pupil is missing from school for ten school days, and no contact is made with parent/carer, statutory guidelines are followed and a CME referral (CME) is made to the Local Authority.

The Local Authority must be notified when CHS is to delete a pupil from its register:

- if they have been taken out of school to be educated elsewhere and notification has been received in writing (EHE);
- if they have been permanently excluded.

When a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The various stakeholders at CHS attendance have the following roles and responsibilities:

The Local School Committee

The Local School Committee is legally responsible for many aspects of school management including the attendance register and so it is registered with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, the HT manages the day-to-day running of the school, and in so doing, takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this Policy.

Parents/Carers

If a child is going to be absent from school, parents/carers must contact the Attendance Officer on 01702 354441 or email attendance@chasehigh.org

Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to illness.

Pupils

- Pupils must ensure that they attend regularly 100% of the time, in correct uniform, properly equipped and ready to learn.
- Pupils must attend all lessons punctually and arrive in school by 08.20.
- Pupils must not leave the school site without permission.

The Headteacher

- The HT has overall responsibility for attendance and ensures that the school meets its legal requirement, sets required targets for attendance and unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures.
- The HT ensures that staff promote a positive approach to attendance across the school, using agreed upon strategies.
- The HT's termly report to the Local School Committee provides attendance data and an analysis of this data.
- The HT has a duty to notify the Local Authority where pupils are persistently absent.

Staff

Staff are required to take accurate registers within five minutes of the lesson start. Names of pupils missing, who have previously been on site are emailed to the Return to Learning email account. Pupils arriving at lesson after the five-minute bell are given a late mark and a comment added detailing the number of minutes late.

Year Leaders

- Give attendance issues a high profile when managing their Year Groups. This is done via assemblies, through graphic displays, detailing class, Year Group and whole school attendance, ensuring that this information is prominently displayed so that all stakeholders can view the progress being made on the targets set.
- Are responsible for supporting Form Tutors in following up all attendance issues, including post-registration absence.
- Are responsible for holding detentions for pupils, who are late for registration.
- Notify staff members as soon as possible if a pupil is experiencing particular difficulties that have led to absence.
- Are responsible for arranging termly celebrations for those pupils, who achieve 100% attendance, and for tutor groups, who have achieved the highest termly attendance percentage.
- Celebrate the tutor group that has achieved the highest weekly attendance in the weekly assembly.
- Set targets for improvement to those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.

Subject Leaders

- Responsible for supporting subject teachers and relevant Year Leaders in following up all attendance issues including post-registration absence and poor punctuality.

Form Tutors

- Give a late mark and add a comment with the number of minutes late for any pupil arriving after the register has closed.
 - If a pupil arrives after tutor time has finished, they should report to Pupil Reception and sign in using the electronic Inventory System.
- Actively use praise for those pupils, who attend regularly and punctually and for those pupils, whose attendance/punctuality has shown a marked improvement.
- Responsible for welcoming pupils back to school and should discuss reasons for absence.
- Advise the relevant Year Leader, who contacts parents/carers, in the case of pupils, who are persistently late for registration.
- Monitor attendance and unauthorised absence with pupils on a weekly basis.

- Place any pupil below 90% on an attendance report.

Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer

- Complete regular reconciliations of the electronic registers.
- Make parental contact when absences have not been explained or illness exceeds three days.
- Follow statutory guidelines and report any child, who is missing from education, to the Local Authority.
- Liaise with all staff about pupil attendance.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school.

Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks that their child is reluctant to attend school, they must inform the school and it works with them to bring an improvement. This can include requesting support from external agencies.

Where external agencies are supporting the family, the school attends meetings and works in conjunction with all parties.

Parents/carers are expected to work with the school and Local Authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents/carers should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority.

If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a penalty notice (see Southend Code of Conduct), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during term time to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school”. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that HTs may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are “exceptional circumstances”, and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is, therefore, a rule at CHS that a leave of absence is not granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the HT, irrespective of the child’s overall attendance, in line with Government guidance. Only the HT may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made, in writing, on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent/carer removes a child when the application for leave has been refused, or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by CHS in accordance with the Southend Code of Conduct.

At CHS, 'exceptional circumstances' are interpreted as; being of unique and significant emotional, educational, or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the HT).

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'. By 'unavoidable', the school means an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

To request a leave of absence from the school see Appendix 1. The term 'exceptional circumstances' is interpreted in such a way as not to disadvantage or discriminate against children or families with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority upon CHS' request. The Education Welfare Officer is duty bound to refer any cases where:

- leave taken during term time for holidays or where notification to the school has been made, where the level of absence from school has become a high-level concern;
- interventions by the school's attendance process have had no impact on improving attendance.

Penalty notices are issued for:

- unauthorised absence;
- holidays in term time without permission;
- suspended/permanently excluded pupils found in a public place during the first five days or suspension/permanent exclusion.

Cost of the notice is £60.00 per child, per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 per child, per parent/carer if paid within 28 days. Parents/carers can be prosecuted if they do not pay the fine after 28 days.

Attendance Concerns

When a CHS pupil is absent for no apparent reason, it is the duty of all staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons, they should consider factors that could relate to the Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies. The Form Tutor has a particular role to play in identifying reasons for absence and addressing such issues, with the support of the whole school staff.

A Staged Approach

CHS adopts Southend Local Authority's staged approach to attendance as set out in the Local Authority's policy, strategy and guidance document.

The School Attendance and Child Employment Service can be contacted directly at the Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6ER on 01702 215000.

The CHS Attendance Officer may be contacted on the school telephone number 01702 354441 or via the dedicated attendance email address: attendance@chasehigh.org.

Appendix 1 – Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time

Prittlewell Chase
Westcliff-on-Sea
Essex
SS0 0RT



chasehigh.school@chasehigh.org
www.chasehigh.org

Headteacher:
Mr J Foster BSc Hons NPQH

CHASE HIGH SCHOOL
Aspiration, Character & Excellence

Tel: 01702 354441

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

There is no entitlement to parents/carers to take their child out of school during term time. However, you may apply to the school for leave of absence if you believe that there are exceptional circumstances. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken, the case will be referred to the Local Authority, which may issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days) to each parent/carer for each child taken out of school.

Important: Please complete one application per child.

Name of child	
Date of birth	
Year/tutor group	
First date of absence	
Last date of absence	
Number of days absence requested	

Important: I confirm that a letter is attached outlining the 'exceptional circumstances' for which a leave of absence is being applied for. I am also attaching supporting documentation.

I acknowledge that it is entirely the decision of the Headteacher whether or not the reason provided constitutes an exceptional circumstance. Furthermore, I also understand that failure to attach a letter will result in this application not being considered.

Signed	
Print name	
Relationship to child	
Date	



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Chief Executive Officer: Mr R Duff
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