

Charlton House Independent School



'Love One Another'

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed and approved by FGB April 2022

To be reviewed by FGB April 2024

Date	Sept 21	Apr 2022		
Reviewed by	GOVS	GOV DO		

Charlton House Independent School

Attendance Policy

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/ students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is 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 or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital they are at school, on time, every day the school is open, 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, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

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, employment or training

Operating the Policy

Section 1 - Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletters and on our school website
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions and certificates.
- Set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school.

Section 2 - Roles and Responsibilities:

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leader

The Head Teacher 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. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

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
- Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence

Responsibilities of Pupils:

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

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

- Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/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 will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence by 9.30am.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter 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.
- Register your child at the School Office if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Section 3 - 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 1.20pm.

Lateness /Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of school is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late, they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8:50am, and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time. Morning registration is at 8.50am and it closes at 9.00am
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary
- Arrival after the close of registration (9.00am) 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
- 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

Pupils who are consistently 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, guardians 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, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. 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.

Section 4 - What to do if my 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 you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone 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*
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Head Teacher if absences persist

Third Day Absence

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you, via any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquiries to known friends, wider family.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year (for whatever reason) they are defined as persistent absentees. Where this absence is authorised, the school will meet with parents / carers in order to ascertain any underlying medical reasons for the level of absence. The school may decide not to authorise any future absences without medical evidence.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. If your child has had an absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, we will agree a plan with you to ensure that attendance improves.

Children at this school are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Section 5 - Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: (Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Head Teachers 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 during 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 an application form

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Section 6 - 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 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 etc.
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained

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.

Section 7 - The law

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.

- 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 are complicit in the child's absence.

Section 8 - Advice to parents and carers

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 dealt with 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, bullying, 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.

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 he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school: chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

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.

Section 9 - Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to the secondary school) parents are asked to:

- Give the school office 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.

Section 10 - further information

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 Head Teacher 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.

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

Parents 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 Head Teacher'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 Head Teacher and are not likely to be

approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is 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.

Section 11 - Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.