

Chestnuts Primary School

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Adopted by: Chestnuts

Dated: November 2014 (Every Two Years Review)

Signed: (Chair of Standards)

Dated:

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Status: This policy is reviewed every 2 years by the school leadership team	

Chestnuts Primary School

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

At Chestnuts Primary School we seek to ensure that all pupils receive a high quality, full-time, appropriate education in a safe and caring environment to enable all pupils to reach their full potential.

Using a whole school ethos all members of the school community (including parents/carers and pupils) will be involved in encouraging and facilitating full school attendance so that all pupils are able to access all of the opportunities available to them during the primary phase of their education.

We aim to develop and continue positive and consistent communication between school, home and LA officers.

PRINCIPLES

- The Education Act 1996, section 7 states that, *“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”*.
- It is important that school staff, pupils, parents and carers value good school attendance and punctuality. Staff and parents/carers should be aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the attendance of pupils.

PURPOSE OF THE ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

- To improve and maintain levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To minimise disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absence and to maximise pupils educational opportunities.
- To develop a framework with defined and agreed roles and responsibilities which provides support, guidance and consistency in the area of school attendance.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that, ‘If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.’

- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent or carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Absences will only be authorised by the Head teacher if he/she is satisfied with the validity of the explanation offered for the absence.
- The keeping of accurate registers is required by law. Registration must take place twice each day: once at the beginning of the day, and once during the afternoon.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Improving and maintaining good school attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of everyone in the school community.

1. The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher

- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will ensure that manual and electronic registers are kept accurately in accordance with legislation and that electronic registers are updated regularly. See attendance procedures, guidance for schools and services.
- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will oversee the authorisation of all absences and where there is any doubt about authorising an absence, the head teacher will clarify this.
- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will ensure that an accurate daily record of lateness is kept by use of a late book and that information from the late book is transferred to the manual and electronic registers daily.
- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will ensure that the importance of good school attendance and punctuality and the expectations of this are featured in the school information pack and are communicated to parents and carers of pupils at the school regularly.
- The Head teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will send appropriate letters to parents/carers and / or meet with parents/carers if a pupil's absence gives cause for concern.
- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will ensure that where a pupil's attendance has deteriorated and is within the remit to be referred to the Education Welfare Service, referrals are made promptly in line with LA and DSCF guidance and legislation on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) form.

- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will decide whether to authorise parental requests for leave of absence in term time on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the year group of the child, attendance history, previous requests for leave, the impact of leave on the child's educational outcomes, the reason for the request and the time of year. The Head teacher will communicate their decision to parents in writing. Holidays taken during the school term are discouraged as they will impact negatively on a child's ability to achieve.
- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will designate a member of staff to meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and to represent the school in meetings regarding attendance with parents and other professionals. This member of staff will be in a position to feedback to the Head teacher appropriately so that strategic decisions may be taken.
- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher will set challenging attendance targets for the school each academic year informed by analysis of the school's attendance data and in agreement with Local Authority.
- The Head Teacher/Deputy Head will ensure the application of late procedures at the beginning and end of the school day.

1. Class Teacher

- The Class teacher will keep an accurate record of attendance and absence in accordance with LA and DCSF guidance.
- The Class teacher will alert the Head teacher to any pupils about whom they have concerns regarding their school attendance and punctuality.
- The Class teacher will differentiate accordingly between authorised and unauthorised absence. The class teacher will monitor the attendance of the pupils in their class and will follow up reasons for absences promptly.
- The class teacher will talk to parents as soon as concerns arise about attendance and punctuality concerns and will discuss attendance with parents and carers at parents' evenings.
- The class teacher will request reasons for individual absences from pupils/parents/carers.
- The class teacher will take the register at 8.55am to ensure consistency of registration across the school.
- The class teacher will return registers to the office promptly after registration at 9.05am.
- The class teacher will encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality (if possible/in place, through the school / class reward system).

2. Attendance Team

- The Attendance Team consists of Mary Sutherland
- The Attendance Team will promote good school attendance through regular assemblies at school, updating the attendance notice board and highlighting attendance regularly in newsletters.
- The Attendance Team will update attendance and absence data accurately and promptly from manual registers to electronic registers.
- The Attendance Team will code absences in accordance with the DCSF codes (Appendix 1) in the registers.
- The Attendance Team will record messages left regarding children's absence in the register accordingly, including, where illness is cited as the reason, the nature of the illness.
- The Attendance Team will monitor the late book effectively and will record the time of arrival of pupils, the reason for their late arrival, their name and class.
- The Attendance Team will transfer information from the late book to the registers.
- The Attendance Team will operate First Day Calling for pupils who are absent from school where a parent/carer has not contacted the school regarding their absence and will keep a log of these calls.
- The Attendance Team will, monitor lateness in the morning and evening. Morning lateness will be recorded in electronic registration systems and afternoon lateness will be monitored by the senior leadership team. Children not collected at 4pm will be referred to social care as a 'left child'.

3. Education Welfare Service

- Will meet with the school regularly and will discuss open cases, all pupils with attendance of 90% or below and pupils whose attendance is beginning to cause concern.
- Will support the school to identify poor patterns of attendance through data provided by the school, for individual pupils and cohorts of pupils e.g. by gender, ethnicity, year group and at whole school level and help them to implement strategies to address these.
- Will support staff in the development of whole school approaches to maintain and develop excellent attendance and punctuality.

- Will assist those families who are experiencing difficulties with school attendance through offering parenting advice, signposting to other agencies and working within a multi-agency framework.
- Where the school's attempts to improve attendance of individual pupils have failed, the EWS will carry out attendance clinic meetings with parents/carers to alert them to the concerns about poor attendance and of their legal responsibilities prior to them being referred to EWS.
- Will progress all referrals for poor school attendance, in line with the service level agreement, through the fast track to attendance scheme (if appropriate). This will include legal action where necessary.

4. Parents / Carers

- Will be expected to notify the school on the first day of their child's absence.
- Will be expected to avoid making medical / dental appointments during the school day where possible.
- Will be expected to provide copies of appointment cards and letters to the school for absences.
- Will be expected to ensure that their children are prepared for school so that they arrive at school on time every day.
- Will be expected to encourage their children about the importance of attending school every day.
- Will be expected to apply to the Head teacher using the holiday application form (Appendix 2), for any leave of absence within the school term. Holidays in term time are not a right.
- Will be expected to contact the school and /or the EWO if they are having trouble ensuring their child's regular attendance at school.
- Will be expected to collect (or arrange to be collected) their child at the end of the school day. child will be supervised until 4pm by senior staff and after that time Local Authority 'Left Children' policies will be applied.

5. Pupils

- Pupils will be made aware of the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school.
- Pupils will be encouraged to talk to a member of school staff if there is anything which makes them feel unhappy at school and could reduce their willingness to attend.

Appendix 1 – First Day Contact Guidelines

First day contact is a widely used practice in schools and has been shown to improve attendance rates. The correct procedure at Chestnuts Primary School is as follows:

- As soon as the registers are returned to the office, staff check absentees against messages received.
- For persistent absentees, see the relevant section above. For other pupils for whom no message has been received, staff will attempt to make contact with the parent at the earliest opportunity.
- When contact is made, the parent will be asked for the reason for absence. In the event that no proper reason is supplied, the parent will be informed that the absence will not be authorised.
- In the case of minor ailments, the parent will be encouraged to send the child in with an assurance that school will keep a close eye on him/her. (NB – if there has been a spate of certain symptoms in the school or community, such minor illnesses may be treated as a valid reason for absence).
- Where no contact is made, a message should be left asking the parent to contact the school. Where it is impossible to leave a message, a note should be sent.
- Reasons for absence are then added to the register.

Appendix 2 – requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to maximise their educational opportunities. Interruptions in school attendance disrupt continuity of learning and have a negative impact on attainment.

It is the school's responsibility to provide the best education possible. We can only do this if children attend regularly. There is a direct correlation between Achievement and attendance, well before GCSE.

The Government's guidance states that only under exceptional circumstances may the Head Teacher consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school for a maximum of 10 days in any one school year.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

Amendments have been made to the 2007 Regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments are as follows and came into force on 1st September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within the 28 days; or £120 if they pay within 42 days.

Amendments to 2007 regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, 1 September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.