Chalkwell Hall Infant School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

We have adopted Southend-on-Sea Borough Council’s model policy.

Agreed by Governing Body: 29th November 2017

Review date: Autumn 2020
AIMS

This school is committed to providing an effective and efficient education for all pupils. We will ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that impede full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

The school will actively promote the value of regular attendance. We recognise that schools that have high attendance are effective in promoting a positive attitude to attendance across the whole school.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The school is obligated by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised.

Under the Provision of The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2004 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 The Child and Family Intervention Service is authorised to operate this code and will ensure administration of justice of the necessary process and in order to fully comply with Article 6 and 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and ensure the consistent, fair and transparent application of penalty notices throughout the borough.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The various stakeholders in school attendance have the following roles and responsibilities.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body has the following statutory duties in relation to school attendance:

- Ensure that admission and attendance registers are properly kept;
- Ensure that attendance statistics are made available to the DfES and the LEA, including informing the LEA if a pupil has been continuously absent for 2 weeks or more (without a medical certificate);
- Ensure that attendance data, including authorised and unauthorised absence is provided in the school prospectus.

In addition Governors will adopt the following strategies which are recognised as good practice:

- Governors agree attendance targets to help the school to further improve attendance.
- Governors participate in training on attendance issues.
- Ensure that the school monitors attendance and evaluates the success of the school’s attendance policy, as part of school self-evaluation. The results of this process are reported to Governors, who monitor attendance
and punctuality at the school on a termly basis. The Headteacher’s termly report to Governors provides attendance data and an analysis of this data.

- Governors are encouraged to ask questions about:
  - The attendance of different groups within the school;
  - Any comparative information with other schools;
  - Trends in attendance.
- The Governing Body may wish to appoint a Governor with specific responsibilities for school attendance matters.

The Headteacher

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance and ensures that the school meets the legal requirements, sets required targets for attendance and unauthorised absence and publishes attendance figures.
- The Headteacher ensures that all staff encourage a positive approach to attendance across the school, using agreed strategies.
- The Headteacher will ensure that parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality at the point of admission. This will be supported in the signing of the Home School Agreement.
- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the school rigorously monitors attendance and for taking action to further improve attendance.
- The Headteacher has a duty under The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 to make a return to the Local Education Authority where there is a poor pattern of attendance or a pupil had been absent for more than 10 school days.
- The Headteacher has a duty under the Provision of The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2004 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to notify the Local Education Authority where a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised for more than 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) and those for which the school cannot authorise or has not given permission.
- The Headteacher should ensure that the school works in effective partnership with other agencies which may support attendance issues, e.g. Youth Offender Service, Connexions, Social Care, Health Services and Traveller Education Services.
- The Headteacher should ensure that the school works effectively with Southend-on Sea Borough Councils’s Early Help Team to support any attendance issues.

The Pupil Data Officer

- The Pupil Data Officer is responsible for registration procedures, ensuring that class teachers keep registers in the correct manner, monitoring overall attendance and advising the Headteacher.
- The designated member of staff is responsible for supporting class teachers in following up all attendance issues, including post registration.
- The Pupil Data Officer is responsible for monitoring school attendance, and where appropriate, instigating the appropriate intervention, i.e. Level 1 meetings between the Pupil Data Officer, The Learning Mentor and parents, and/or Level 2 meetings between the Headteacher, Early Help and parents. Early Help will try to resolve the situation by agreement with the school and parents but, if ways of trying to improve the child’s
attendance has failed and unauthorised absences persist, Early Help can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

- The Pupil Data Officer has a duty under the Provision of The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2004 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to notify the Local Education Authority where a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised for more than 10 sessions (5 consecutive days) and those for which the school cannot authorise or has not given permission.

- The Pupil Data Officer meets regularly with the Early Help Team to discuss attendance issues highlighted by the school monitoring system.

- The Pupil Data Officer is responsible for organising spot checks on post registration truancy at regular intervals and all discrepancies will be reported to the Headteacher, who will follow up in accordance with the procedures for other unauthorised absence.

- If contacted by a parent in respect of an attendance issue, the school will arrange to meet with parents who have concerns as a matter of priority and work with them in the interest of their child.

- The Pupil Data Officer is responsible for ensuring that eligible pupils receive merits and awards for good attendance and punctuality. This will be notified to the Headteacher weekly for the Celebration Assembly.

- The Pupil Data Officer will telephone home on the first day of absence if a message or call has not been received by 9.20am concerning a child’s absence.

- Absence is automatically unauthorised if there is not contact made before 9.20am each day by the parent/carer.

- In order to safeguard our children, the Pupil Data Officer will inform the Headteacher if no contact is made before the end of the day. If a child cannot be located the school will contact the Child Protection team.

- Requests are sent to parents/carers inviting them to meet with the Headteacher to discuss issues with punctuality and attendance.

The Class Teacher

- The class teacher has a vital role to play in raising the attendance and punctuality in our school.

- The class teacher ensures that registration periods are orderly and calm and that the registers are called promptly and correctly. Registers will be returned to the office as soon as the registration period is finished so that they are available for inspection by local authority nominees, information and data reading processes.

- If there are any Child Protection concerns the designated teacher for Child Protection should be informed on the first day of absence. The teacher will also notify the Headteacher or Pupil Data Officer of any attendance concerns.

- Class teachers are responsible for welcoming pupils back to school on their return from absence.

Parents and Carers

- Chalkwell Hall Infant School endeavours to work in partnership with parents to achieve good school attendance.

- Parents/Carers have responsibilities which are outlined in the Home-School agreement.
• Parents/Carers should ensure their children attend regularly and punctually.
• Parents/Carers should provide the school with up-to-date information about points of contact and those with ‘parental responsibility’.
• Parents/Carers should contact the school (telephone/email) on the first day of a pupil’s absence by 9.20am. They should state the reason for their absence and also the date on which they are expected to return to school.
• Appointments for medical reasons should be made outside school time when possible, but if in school time the appointment card should be shown, and a copy taken by the Pupil Data Officer in advance. Parents should also ensure that their children are properly equipped and fit for a learning environment.
• Parents should inform the school of any relevant factors (e.g. bereavement) which could affect the child’s attendance and behaviour.
• Parents who decide to take holidays during term time will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Under the Provision of The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2004 and Subsection (1) Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 in certain cases of unauthorised absence a penalty notice may be issued to parent(s)/carer(s) responsible.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually and be appropriately prepared for lessons as stated in the home/school agreement.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

• Chalkwell Hall Infant School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school’s ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow-up action will be taken.
• A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils’ needs.
• Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Early Help Team are responsible for regularly collecting and analysing data from attendance returns each half-term. Discussions are held between the Pupil Data Officer and Early Help in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.
• Classes will receive an Attendance Certificate for the class with the best attendance on a weekly, termly and yearly basis. Attendance class of the week will be announced and rewarded during Friday Celebration Assembly. Pupils have been asked to suggest ideas that they would like to win as a class. These suggestions are placed in a hat and one is pulled out during assembly. This is the prize that attendance class of the week will win. Class members also get a sticker each.
• Individual attendance awards and certificates are awarded to those children who have achieved good attendance on a termly and yearly basis. This also includes individuals whose attendance has improved following the appropriate intervention work.
• Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school prospectus, parents’ evenings, etc) of the importance of good attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- The Headteacher will make an annual report to the school’s Governing Body on attendance matters.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies – Educational Psychology Service, Social Care and other agencies - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Pupil Data Officer will co-ordinate an ‘Attendance Awareness Week’ in an effort to increase the importance of attending school to parents, pupils and staff.

**ATTENDANCE CONCERNS**

When a pupil of this school is absent for no apparent reason it is the duty of all staff to consider possible causes. When considering reasons they should bear in mind factors that could relate to the child protection, behaviour, and the anti-bullying policies. The class teacher will have 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**

The school adopts Southend on Sea LA’s staged approach to attendance as set out in the LA’s policy, strategy and guidance document.

The Children & Learning Department can be contacted directly at Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, SS2 6ER or 01702 215909.