



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date: January 2024
Review Due: March 2025
(Under review)

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



Introduction

At Chivenor we believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils to ensure they can benefit fully from the Proud Traditions, Wide Horizons and High Achievement that Griffin Schools offer. We aim to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any barriers to this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. The school aims at 100% attendance for pupils and promotes good punctuality now and for the future.

Parents and carers should be aware that if they fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually they may be prosecuted under section 444 Education Act 1996 by the Local Authority.

Regular and punctual attendance provides the means for children to take advantage of all educational opportunities. It ensures continuity, promotes responsibility and a purpose which can be carried into adult life. A pupil who is late or absent misses the introduction to a lesson or a new concept, causes disruption to others and is likely to have missed the instructions to the lesson, thus putting themselves at a disadvantage.

It is very important therefore that parents and carers make sure that their child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Safeguarding:

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, we will adhere to 'Working together to Safeguard Children' (March 2013): Protecting children from maltreatment. Preventing impairment of children's health or development. Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. Taking action to enable all children have the best life chances.

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

The Law relating to safeguarding Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide details on attendance in our regular Newsletter, website and Our School App
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- Track pupils who have an attendance below 95%
- Contact parents/carers as soon as concerns arise

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Roles and Responsibilities

Parents, Guardians and Pupils

Parents/carers of children of compulsory school age are legally required to ensure that they receive fulltime education. Parents/carers are also responsible for informing the school of any absence as soon as possible; the school expects to be contacted on each day of the absence. This can be done by telephoning the school, by personal contact, email or by written note. The reason for absence and when the child is expected to return to school should be stated. Pupils are expected to arrive at school punctually. Parents are expected to notify the school of changes to contact details and if there is a change in home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

Persistent lateness can be seen as absence and is managed in the same way as poor attendance by the school. Parents should ensure that their child arrives at school before the morning bell, prepared to begin the school day. Pupils should be in the playground no later than 5 minutes before the start of the school day at 8.45am. The main school playground doors are open from 8.30am to so they enter the school calmly ready for their day ahead. School starts 8.45am and the doors are closed at this time. Entry then is made via the main reception to school and lateness recorded. (Start times may differ during Covid-19 organisation. Registers will close 15 minutes after final staggered year group has begun).

School Attendance Lead

The designated senior member of staff responsible for attendance is supported by the school's attendance Lead. Attendance is regularly monitored so that pupils at risk of persistent absence can be identified. Investigations are made to understand the nature of problems, identifying how the school can support parents/carers in meeting their legal responsibility. A range of actions may be taken according to the percentage of absence and reasons provided by parents/carers: these may include referral to Early Help or Children's Services.

Leave of Absence

The school can approve absence. The school does not have to accept the parent/carers offered explanation as a valid cause for absence. There are certain circumstances outlined in the DfE guidelines that the school categorises as authorised absence. The guidelines are based on the needs of the community and the kinds of reasons parent/carers may wish their children to take leave of absence. The school follows the guidelines for authorising absence as listed below:

- Illness, emergency medical, dental and hospital appointments. It is expected that routine check-ups, including hospital review appointments should, as far as possible, be made during holiday periods or after school hours.
- Family bereavements
- Attending a religious observance
- Off-site activities (These fall into two categories; educational visits or individual activities e.g. an examination)
- Exclusion (Excluded pupils are treated as authorised absence. They will remain on the school's register unless permanently excluded when the situation has to be reviewed)

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NB. Chivenor does not authorise a leave of absence for extended periods during term times e.g. extended holidays or visiting family abroad.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best dealt with between the school, the parents/carers and the child.

Any student in Chivenor Primary identified as having attendance below 90% will have all further absence unauthorised recorded on the schools register.

Medical Evidence

If a child's attendance becomes a concern, the parents/carers will be sent a letter. No further absence will be authorised without supporting medical evidence. If a child's attendance continues to be a cause for concern, the parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance clinic to discuss any issues with the Schools Attendance Lead and/or member of the school's Senior Leadership Team.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. (90% or less). Absence at this level does considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and the school requires parents' full support and cooperation to address this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. Work missed during absence may be sent home to be completed.

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent, the procedure is:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence or; or
- Enter the school and report to reception, who will then arrange for an appropriate member of staff to discuss the absence

If a child is absent the school will:

- Telephone or text the named contact on the first day of absence if absence has not been reported
- Invite parents and carers in to discuss the situation with the Attendance Lead and/or a member of the senior management team if absences persist; or
- Refer the matter to our Attendance Consultant and/or the Local Authority if attendance moves below 93%.

Telephone number: 0121 675 9833

There are times when the school needs to contact parents, including regarding absence. We need to have current contact numbers at all times. There is a duty to notify the school as soon as possible of any changes to contact details.

Holidays in Term Time:

We operate the DfE zero tolerance approach to extended holidays and we notify parents/carers of this so that they can make an informed decision about removing children from school for this reason. We refer children with unauthorised extended holiday absence to the local authority who arranges for fixed penalty fines to be issued. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the fine may result in the Local Authority prosecuting. An unauthorised absence referral will be made to the EIO (Education Investigation Officer for the Local Authority)

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

- (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
- (b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

In light of the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations, Chivenor Primary School will only grant leave where parents and carers prove exceptional circumstances.

All applications must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least 5 school days prior to the requested leave date. Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing.

A general guide for parent's, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13-week holiday time would not be authorised. On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register.

Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5-day notice will result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).

Penalty Notice Fines issued by the Local Authority

The Education Investigation Service at the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice Fine of up to £120 (per parent/per child) or instigate legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court in the following circumstances:

- Where an excluded child is identified in a public place in the first 6 days of an exclusion
- Where a Formal Warning Notice has previously been issued regarding unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence is accrued

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- Where there is recorded unauthorised term time leave of absence/holiday leave

Further information regarding Penalty Notice Fines and other enforcement proceedings relating to school attendance can be obtained from the Education Investigation Service (0121 303 4983).

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The school has targets to improve attendance and each child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Our school target reflects The Department for Education expectations that a child should have an annual school attendance of not less than 96.4%.

By working together, we can ensure that every child achieves that goal.

See also DfE Recording attendance during Coronavirus outbreak (2020).