

Charles Kingsley's CE Primary School

Attendance Policy



**This policy was reviewed by the Governing Body:
Autumn Term 2016**

Headteacher

Date

Chair of Committee

Date

**Next Review Date: Autumn Term 2017 or pending
updates in advice on Penalty Notices**

The Head Teacher in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for implementing this policy in conjunction with all staff. The Governing Body are responsible for monitoring its effectiveness.

National Guidance

It is not statutory for schools to have an attendance policy however, Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on 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.

Therefore the Governing Body of Charles Kingsley's CE Primary School have written an Attendance Policy.

DfE Guidance School Attendance (2014):

Schools should:

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
2. Ensure every child has access to full time education
3. Act early to address patterns of absence

Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school attend regularly

SECTION I

Rationale

At Charles Kingsley's CE Primary School we believe that for a child to maximise their learning a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils 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 at Charles Kingsley's CE Primary School it is vital your child is 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

SECTION 2

2.1 Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home/School agreement contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment
- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our weekly newsletter
- keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality and report to parents and carers when attendance falls below 95%
- contact a parent when a child is absent with no explanation
- may seek verification from health professionals in cases of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions
- monitor and support attendance and punctuality with support from the Inclusion Team
- set targets for the school and for individual classes for attendance
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- acknowledge and good or improving individual attendance

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the School's Attendance Leader

The Headteacher, 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.

The Headteacher will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed by the SIMS Manager. She 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 parent/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
- 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:

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:

- ensure your child attends school every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence, notifying the school of the first and each day of absence.
- discuss with the Headteacher any planned absences well in advance.
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or via the Parentmail Absence Reporting Tab on the first and subsequent days of absence.
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments. Medical appointment cards/letters will be asked to be seen prior to day of appointment
- only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- ensure that their child arrives at school on time and is prepared for the school day
- contact the school before 9.20 a.m. to explain why their child is unable to attend school for each day of their absence. NB it will be for the school decide if that absence will be authorised or not
- take responsibility for registering at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours
- notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details
- inform the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and attitude to learning for their child

SECTION 3

3.1 Recording Absence

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day 8.50am and again for the afternoon session at 1.05 pm.

3.2. Lateness/Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school and lessons are 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 the time**. Morning registration is at 8.50am and the official register 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 and 1.15pm) 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.
- Where children have persistent lateness this will be marked as U.
- 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 may 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 by the Headteacher 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. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period the school will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance. (See section 6 of this policy for further detail).

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day (3.15pm) 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.

3.3 What do I do if my child is absent?

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 and by 9.20am on the first day of absence;

- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you 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 Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

Third Day Absence

Please Note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance.

We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family.

Ten Day's Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days.

If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'.

Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% (3 weeks / sessions) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees (PA)**. The school will call a meeting with the parents. PA pupils their parents will be subject to an Attendance Plan.

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%.

As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and depending on the reasons for the absence will invite you into school to discuss ways of support.

Children at Charles Kingsley's CE Primary 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 4

Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

It is important to note that Headteachers 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 in 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 available from the school office in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

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 5

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, days out
 - 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 6

Possible penalties for non-attendance

Once you have registered your child at a school it is your responsibility to make sure that she/he attends regularly and punctually. If you fail to do so the Local Authority has a statutory duty to consider legal action to enforce school attendance.

There are a number of legal measures that the Local Authority can pursue, these include:

- being issued a voluntary parenting contract
- being included in the fast track system which means you will be given 12 weeks to improve your child's attendance
- receiving a penalty notice. This is a fine of £60 per parent/carer for periods of unauthorised absence such as truancy, holidays in term time, lateness, unauthorised absence during formal exams, schools assessment or testing or poor patterns of attendance/punctuality
- being prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. This means you could receive a community order, a fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carer or a custodial sentence
- your child being issued with an education supervision order. This is an order where the child attends court and certain measures are put in place regarding attendance at school.

Update to parents regarding term-time absence, issuing of penalty notices and the HCC Code of Conduct in the autumn term 2016

Term time absence: Isle of Wight Council – v – Platt

This case was heard in the High Court in May. Since the decision was published, the Isle of Wight Council have sought leave to appeal to the Supreme Court. It is expected that this appeal hearing will take place within the next six months.

The law regarding term time absence, which includes holidays, has not changed; schools should not authorise absence in term time in line with Department of Education regulation unless headteachers believe the circumstances for the absence are exceptional. Guidance to help headteachers decide what could be considered 'exceptional circumstances' has been published by the National Association of Headteachers - [NAHT guidance on authorised absence](#).

In this guidance exceptional absence must be seen as rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By unavoidable they mean - could not reasonably be scheduled for another time.

In June the Minister of State of Schools, Nick Gibb MP, wrote to all headteachers summarising the Government's position following the Isle of Wight Council – v- Platt court case, see [Nick Gibb's letter](#).

As instructed in the letter from the Minister of State for Education, Hampshire County Council is not refunding any penalty notices paid prior to the court case in May 2016.

Hampshire County Council has made its position clear to schools. The Council has confirmed that it is continuing to follow Department of Education regulation and is supporting schools to pursue legal intervention for poor attendance. The Council has advised headteachers that schools should pursue legal remedies where appropriate and continue to issue penalty notices where there is clear evidence of irregular attendance in accordance with the current legal interpretation of this.

SECTION 7

7.1 My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Although we hope this would never be the case children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out 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, friendship problems, and 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.

7.2 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.

Your child will bring home a school diary each evening. Please ensure you look at it with your child and sign it ready for the next day.

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.

7.3 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 Headteacher 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.

7.4. 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 a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the headteachers 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 Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

7.5 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 8

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

APPENDIX 1

Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances

Schools are only able to authorise absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. **Please note:** There is no general right to authorise absence for a family holiday. If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we will consider legal action.

You are advised not to make any arrangements until your request has been considered.

Section A – to the headteacher, I wish to apply for

Child's name: _____ Class: _____

To be authorised as absent from school (please include dates and time):

from _____ to _____ (inclusive dates)

If your child has siblings that are also applying for a leave of absence please enter their name and school below:

Child's name(s): _____ School(s): _____

Section B Please explain why you are applying for an authorised absence and the **circumstances** which make your **application exceptional**; and therefore the leave cannot be taken within the normal 13 weeks holiday your child has from school. If you are requesting authorisation to attend a specific event please confirm the date of the event and explain your travel arrangements. If you require additional space please attach.

Section C I am the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. The information I have given on this form is correct.

Signature (parent/carer): _____ Date: _____

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the proprietor (headteacher) of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Section D – for school use only.

Tick as appropriate.

Request approved for _____ number of days from the dates and times _____

A personal discussion with you is requested. Please contact the school to make an appointment with the Headteacher.

Request not approved as the circumstances are not considered to constitute an exceptional reason and/or the impact of this absence will affect your child's educational progress.

PLEASE NOTE: *This leave of absence form serves as a Penalty Notice Warning letter to parent/carers. Any unauthorised absence during this period of time may be subject to a penalty notice for non attendance being issued.*

Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

Current attendance rate: _____

APPENDIX 2

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website

Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.htm>