



# **Attendance Policy**

## **2021 / 2022**

## **Introduction**

Chaucer School;

- Believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident, committed and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their broader school community.
- Expects every student to achieve 100% attendance during an academic year.
- Believes in 'the Best in Everyone' and will work with families and give support where possible to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- Will recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

## **Principles:**

Chaucer School is a welcoming environment for learning to take place.

Children are happy and feel safe. Their health and emotional well-being needs are met.

There are clear links between regular attendance and educational outcomes.

Attendance is a responsibility shared by all staff.

Parents and students are well supported by caring staff.

## **Scope**

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational need they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age the last Friday in June of Year 11.

The aim of this Policy is to enable the School to improve student's attendance by either full and efficient Legal sanctions under section 444 of the Education Act or by referring the student and their families to the relevant agencies to access support.

## **Intention**

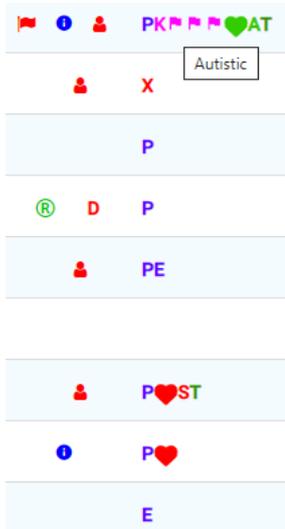
Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates at Chaucer School are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

At Chaucer School we give the achievement of good attendance and punctuality high priority. Students who do not attend school cannot take advantage of educational opportunities and rarely achieve their potential.

## Registering students

All teaching staff are responsible for registering students within the first 5 minutes of a lesson. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action.

Children who are subject to Child Protection Plans, have relevant medical conditions, Social Workers, Pupil Premium entitlements or other important means of support are readily identified on registers.



Hovering over the symbol will provide staff with information relevant to the additional need and/or the support provided – see above.

Red flags are used a method of communication between the School staff and will be used in the following situations (this list is not exhaustive):

- To record information from parents as to a child's whereabouts.
- To enable staff to locate a student that is not in their timetabled lesson.
- To closely monitor students with safeguarding concerns. These students absence is usually reported to relevant outside agencies as part of a Child In Need or Child Protection Plan.

By hovering over the red flag on a student's register staff are able to view the information contained therein and act accordingly.

The red flag system is an integral part of the Academy's Attendance Policy. It is imperative that all staff follow this procedure as it forms a key aspect of our Safeguarding roles and responsibilities towards our students.

- 1.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 1.2 A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

- 1.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 1.4 The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 1.5 The register must record whether the student was:
  - present;
  - absent;
  - present at approved educational activity; or
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

## Recording Absence

Morning and afternoon attendance and absences are recorded electronically using the school's MIS system. Attendance Officers will use attendance codes as set out by DfE.

In addition, the Attendance Team will record any absences where a parent notifies the school, for example in the event of illness on the morning of school or has notified the School through the communication aid of the planner.

## Categorising Absence

2.1 Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

2.2 Parents should advise by telephone on each day of absence. This should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer in the Student's planner, verbal explanations will be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

2.3 Where students have an unacceptable level of Attendance parents will be informed in writing that no further absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided.

2.4 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

The Attendance Officer shall be responsible for changing attendance codes early on the morning of the school day on Bromcom to reflect information received from parents in order for teachers to be advised of reasons for absence. The Attendance Officers shall be responsible for first day contact to establish the reason for an unauthorised absence.

2.5 Absence will be categorised as follows:

2.6 **Illness** - In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where

there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

**2.7 Medical/Dental Appointments** - Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school. Students leaving school during the school day to attend a medical/dental appointment must make prior arrangements at the Attendance Office to collect a pass at the agreed time.

**2.8 Other Authorised Circumstances** This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration support package.

**2.9 Excluded** (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's Year Manager will make arrangements for work to be sent home. Completed work must be returned to the school and handed in at the reintegration meeting.

**3.0 Requests for term time leave of absences** Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on leave during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. The Headteacher will only authorise requests for leave during term time in very exceptional circumstances.

3.1 Parents wishing to take request leave during term time for their child must send a written request to the Headteacher before holiday arrangements are made this must be submitted to the School at least 4 weeks in advance. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually.

3.2 All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child may be removed from the School's roll if the family do not return as expected

3.3 If a student fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, Chaucer School will remove the Student from the School's roll in compliance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

3.4 If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may issue a Penalty Notice.

3.5 **Religious Observance** - Chaucer School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school

holiday periods or weekends and this may necessitate a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

- 3.6 **Study Leave** Study leave may be granted for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations. The School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.
- 3.7 **Traveller Absence** The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.
- 3.8 To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.
- 3.9 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.
- 4.0 When in or around Sheffield, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
- 4.1 Chaucer School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the student must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the student's school place at Chaucer School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.
- 4.2 Chaucer School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:
- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
  - inform the school regarding proposed return dates
- 4.3 Chaucer School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.
- 4.4 **Late Arrival to School** -Late Arrival Registration begins at 8.40am. Students arriving after this point will be required to sign in on the electronic system at reception, which notes their arrival time.
- 4.5 Late arrival data will be analysed and where students are persistently late, school may make contact with parents/carers to investigate reasons for this, with a view to identifying and overcoming barriers to punctual attendance.
- 4.6 In instances of late arrival, students must make their way directly to their timetabled lesson.

- 4.7 Students arriving later than the end of Period 1 without a satisfactory explanation provided by parent/carer will be given a **U code** on the register. The U code will count as an unauthorised absence. We will maintain accurate and up-to-date records of who is present in the building for safeguarding reasons, but we will also be able to use persistent lateness as part of the wider work around providing support and challenge to students, parents and carers.
- 4.8 **Unauthorised absence** will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Full days absence for routine medical appointments where attendance either before or after the appointment could have been achieved.
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school
- Failure to provide medical evidence when students attendance has dropped below 93%

## 5.0 Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from leave after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student

## Children Missing from Education

Chaucer School will follow Sheffield City Council's Children Missing Education Protocol and DCSF Keeping Student Registers guidance when a student's whereabouts is unknown.

Chaucer School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents
- Annually review the School's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

## Using Attendance data

6.1 Student's attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern.

6.2 Every week the Attendance Team will provide all form tutors with attendance data for each student within their form group.

6.3 The Senior Leadership Team will receive a complete set of data.

6.4 Year Managers will receive a complete set of data for their year groups.

6.5 This student level data will be used to trigger school action at the most appropriate level.

6.6 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

6.7 Chaucer School will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

6.8 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

6.9 Weekly attendance levels of each form will be sent to form tutors. The winning form will receive rewards in line with the Year Group Attendance Action Plan.

## Support Systems

7.0 The School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in the School, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the School identify any additional support that may be required.

7.1 Chaucer School also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.

7.2 The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Referral to Year Manager
- School Attendance Report (SAP)
- Attendance Panels
- Completion of FCAF's
- Parenting contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Friendship groups
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages

7.3 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and students.

7.4 Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Chaucer School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

## Legal Sanctions

**8.0 Prosecution where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance: the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.**

8.1 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

8.2 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

8.3 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

8.4 Parenting Contracts (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

8.5 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

8.6 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

8.7 Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A student has accumulated an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

8.8 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the notice was issued.

8.9 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

8.10 Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Sheffield City Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.