



# ATTENDANCE

Chatten Free School

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Approved by:	HLC trustee board
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## Contents

Statement of Intent.....	2
School Attendance and the Law .....	2
Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures.....	3
Registration .....	4
Start and close of registration .....	4
Staff responsible for processes .....	4
Transition periods.....	5
Procedures for Following-Up Absences .....	6
Authorised and unauthorised absences .....	6
Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality .....	7



## Statement of Intent

Chatten Free School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The school recognises that issues around attendance may constitute a child protection/safeguarding concern and will monitor and act accordingly where appropriate.

## School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.



Time off for a family holiday is not a legal right. Under the 2006 education (pupil registration) regulation (amended 2013) there is no provision for head Teacher to grant 'leave of absence' unless under 'exceptional circumstances'. Applications for a leave of absence for holiday must be made in advance in accordance with school procedures. If a holiday is taken without prior permission from the school, or where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in legal action being taken against the parent/carer by the Local Authority.

Under the Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 (R12) deletions from the School Roll must be reported to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, by the school giving reasons for that pupil's removal prior to deletion.

## Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

- Chatten Free School expects pupils to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn.
- Chatten Free School will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- Chatten Free School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- Chatten Free School will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality.
- Chatten Free School will include in reports to parents on achievement and attendance at least annually.
- Pupils, where possible, will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Pupils can expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.
- Pupils will be listened to and respected.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends school, properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence. (consideration should be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language).
- If attendance problems do develop, the school expects parents to work actively with school staff and external agencies, where appropriate.



- Parents do not have a right to take children on holiday in term time. Leave of absence must be granted in advance by the school. Any application will be considered against the pupil's attendance record, family circumstances and timing with regard to assessments and examinations.
- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

## Registration

- At Chatten Free School use an online registration system performed using a computer or tablet device using the Sims system.
- The School office will be able to access this register from the office console
- All notes from parents regarding a pupil's absence will be stored on the pupil's file and retained for three years.

## Start and close of registration

- Chatten Free School will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 30 minutes of the start of the lesson.
- Registration begins at 9.15 am and 1.10 pm each school day and registers will be closed 30 minutes after these times.
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they will be reported as 'late'.
- Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

## Staff responsible for processes

### Head of School

The Head of School responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers and attendance reports on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.

Learners and students whose attendance falls below 90% in any term will be monitored by the Head of School the school recognises that in the vast majority of cases reduced attendance will be related to the complex needs of our pupils.



Where there are concerns, the Head of School will arrange to speak and meet with parents and carers to discuss concerns. Following this, it may be external agencies involvement is sought.

## Administrative Team

- The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection by relevant professionals.
- The administrative team are responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.
- The administrative team are responsible for following up any unauthorised absence to ascertain the reason for lateness or absence on that day.

## Class Teacher/ Lead

- The class teacher/lead is responsible for taking the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session.
- The class teacher is responsible for register maintenance of their own class register especially in an emergency situation e.g. during a fire procedure
- The class teacher is responsible for following up any unexpected absence with the school office to see if a reason has been ascertained for the absence.

## The school

- Chatten Free School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

## Transition periods

Pupils attending Chatten Free School will usually have highly complex needs which will require a careful and individualised transition period. While we aim to get pupils into school on a fulltime timetable as quickly as possible we will put a priority on ensuring that this transition is successful to maximise the possibility of ongoing attendance after that period. To learn more about transitions for new pupils please read our transitions policy.



## Procedures for Following-Up Absences

- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made, then Chatten Free School will contact the parent by telephone by 10.00am on the first day of absence.
- By 10.30am each day office staff will provide an email notification to the Head of School Deputy Head Teacher and Deputy DSL informing them of the day's absences and whether or not these have been authorised. Unauthorised absences, where we are unable to establish any contact with parents or carers, will be treated as a potential child protection concern and appropriate action will be taken depending on individual circumstances.
- If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

## Authorised and unauthorised absences

**THE DFE CIRCULAR NUMBER 10/99 STATES THAT PARENTS MAY NOT AUTHORISE ABSENCE, ONLY SCHOOLS CAN DO THIS.**

Absence for the following reasons should preferably be authorised in writing on the child's return to school (consideration should be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language):

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- If permission for absence has been granted in advance by the head teacher
- Transport arranged by the LEA has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance

Examples, but not exclusively, of unauthorised absence may include.

- Shopping
- Haircuts
- Slept late



- No uniform
- Looking after brothers or sisters or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Unapproved holidays

It may be necessary for the school or Inclusion Officer to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of absence e.g.

- Appointment cards/letters
- Medical certificate
- Letter from GP

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Inclusion Officer may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to clarify details of the illness/ medical condition and to establish a possible return date for the child.

## Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality

- Attendance statistics will be collected and used to monitor and inform pastoral practices
- Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports will be used
- Parents, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence
- Pupils with a known attendance problem being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement
- Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality
- Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme
- All issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school.
- New pupils will have a detailed transition plan into our school to maximise the possibility of a transition leading to stable attendance.