

'Growth through Jesus' love so that we learn, persevere, achieve and bear fruit together'



St Chad's CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

2021-22

School expectations and guidance for staff, pupils,
parents/carers and governors.

Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness & Self-Control

Rationale

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff of St Chad's are keen to ensure that all our children attend school regularly and punctually so that they receive the best education possible.

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is an established fact that children who develop poor patterns of attendance and punctuality at primary school tend to continue with this pattern throughout their school life and beyond. For this reason, we as a school want to promote the view that regular attendance is vital to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved 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.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. The attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils.

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service. Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure high levels of pupil attendance and improve levels of punctuality in order to raise achievement and enable pupils to maximise learning opportunities both in school and in later life.

Registration

The school gates are opened and children are welcomed in to school from 8.45am. They are encouraged to walk round to their cloakrooms to hang up coats and bags and then continue in to their classroom whereby they can engage with each other and sort out their belongings prior to settling down for registration at 8.55am. The school gates are closed at 8.55am and any arrivals after this time will need to enter the school via the Reception Office and report to the office staff so that their attendance and lunch time requirements can be recorded.

Any child who arrives after 8.55am but before 9.10am will have their attendance recorded with a late mark (L). Parents/ Carers will be expected to enter via the school office and sign the school late register. The office staff will record the reason given for the lateness.

Any child who arrives after 9.10am, will also have to enter via the school office and sign in. The office staff will record the reason given and the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (U).

We would encourage any medical appointments to be made outside of schools hours, however, if this is not possible, we will require proof of medical appointments. If proof is given children will be given an 'M' code for a medical appointment. An 'M' will be given rather than an 'L' if the child returns after 10.30 am.

The afternoon registers are taken at 1.15pm for pupils. Similarly, arrivals after these times but before 1.30pm will be recorded as 'L' and after 1.30pm will be recorded as 'U', unless it is for a Medical Appointment in which case it will be 'M'.

Absences

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must contact the school either personally or by telephone as soon as possible to explain their absence. If no contact is made by 9.30am then a text will be sent to the parent/carer requesting that they contact the school office immediately. If a response is not received by 11.00am, then a further text is sent. If there is still no response then we will endeavour to contact the parent/carer by telephone and record the absence accordingly. Failure in responding to the telephone call or if the absence is not for a legitimate reason will result in the absence being recorded as an unauthorised absence (O).

If school cannot make contact with the parent/carer by 11:00am, school will refer to the EWO- Education Welfare Officer. The EWO will then attempt to contact the parent/carer by telephone and may also carry out a home visit.

Authorised absences include sickness, medical or dentist appointments, religious holidays, funerals and certain other exceptional circumstances authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.

Leave of Absence Requests

The Department for Education (DfE) introduced changes to the law regarding parents taking their children out of school during term time and it makes it clear that leave of absence cannot be granted during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. These changes meant that parents risk receiving a penalty notice (fine) issued by the Local Authority for taking their child out of school in term time without permission from the head teacher.

One year on from these changes, the Local Authority has consulted with schools and reviewed the county's criteria for issuing these penalty notices, for those pupils who miss out on school without permission, and where the Local Authority is, therefore, required by law to take appropriate action.

This has resulted in some changes which are outlined below and which came into effect from 23rd February 2015.

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

- *Previously our approach was to only issue a Penalty Notice if the pupil's overall attendance was below 87%. This threshold has now been removed.*
- *Previously only one Penalty Notice per pupil was issued within an academic year. This limit has been removed so more than one Penalty Notice could be issued for repeated absence without permission during term time.*
- *Previously pupils missing 10 sessions or five days taken together risked a Penalty Notice. Now a combined total of ten sessions (not necessarily grouped as 5 consecutive days) could trigger a Penalty Notice.*
- *Instead of monitoring and totalling holiday absences taken across each academic year, they will now be monitored across the previous three terms, regardless of academic year*

Penalty Notice for persistent absence

- *Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.*

These changes have been agreed with head teachers and have been implemented to support good attendance. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>

End of School Day

At the end of the school day all children should be collected from their classrooms. The school should be notified if anyone other than the parent is collecting a child at the end of the day.

If parents take another child home (e.g. for a neighbour or friend) they should inform the school so each child is accounted for and is safe.

Older children sometimes walk home on their own and the school needs to be aware of this to ensure their safety. Any parent/carer who would like their child to walk home, must complete their request in writing using the school consent form.

In the case of an emergency and parents are unavoidably delayed they should contact the school giving their estimated time of arrival. The staff will then ensure the children are kept on the premises until collected. If the delay is likely to be more than 30 minutes after the school has closed (after 3.15), parents should make arrangements for someone else to collect their child. After 30 minutes of the normal school day, your child will be sent to After School Club and you will be charged. If you are 15 minutes or more late to collect your child from a club, your child will be sent to After School Club and you will be charged.

Parents/Carers who consistently collect their child/children late from school will be referred to Social Services (via First Response).

Monitoring

Attendance and lateness will be monitored on a regular basis. If attendance levels fall below 90% and/or lateness is frequent, a letter (see Appendices for examples) together with a copy of the child's Registration Certificate Report will be sent to parents from the Headteacher.

Help and support is available through school, who will help to resolve any issues, and the situation will continue to be monitored. If you need support, we can help by carrying out an EHA- Early Help Assessment, where support may be offered to the family.

If attendance falls below 90% and/or lateness persists a referral will be made by the school to the Education Welfare Officer, who will contact parents to investigate and resolve the matter.

Appendix I

Addressee ...

Address ...

Date ...

Dear xxx

It has come to my attention that xxx's attendance is causing concern. His / her attendance since xxx is below the average requirement and is at xxx%.

I am also concerned at the lack of communication with the school with regards to these absences and the reasons for them.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct.

The Penalty Notice fine would be:-

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school. Our key priority is to ensure your child is as successful as possible, are able to reach his full potential and gains maximum benefits from his educational experience.

I have enclosed xxx's Attendance Record for you to see and if his / her attendance, and the communication from yourself, does not improve I will have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer. If there is anything you wish to discuss with me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs JM Smith
Headteacher

Appendix II

Date ...

Dear xxx

It has come to my attention that xxx's attendance and persistent lateness are causing concern. He / She has been late to school on xxx occasions since xxx. Although the absences have mostly been caused by illness, I am still concerned by his / her poor level of attendance which is at x% since the beginning of the school year and below the average requirement.

Any absence from school is a cause for concern. Only by attending on time, every day will xxx have the best chance to get the most from her education and every school session is important if he / she is not going to fall behind.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct.

The Penalty Notice fine would be:-

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school. Our key priority is to ensure your child is as successful as possible, is able to reach her full potential and gains maximum benefits from her educational experience.

I have enclosed xxx's Attendance Record for your attention together with a detailed report indicating the levels of lateness since September and if her attendance and punctuality do not improve I will have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer. If there is anything you wish to discuss with me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs JM Smith
Headteacher

Appendix III

Addressee...

Address

Date

Dear ...

It has come to my attention that xxx's attendance is causing concern. Although the absences have been caused by illness, I am still concerned by his / her poor level of attendance which is at x% since the beginning of the school year and below the average requirement.

Any absence from school is a cause for concern. Only by attending on time, every day will xxx have the best chance to get the most from his / her education and every school session is important if he / she is not going to fall behind.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Council's Code of Conduct.

The Penalty Notice fine would be:-

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school. Our key priority is to ensure your child is as successful as possible, is able to reach her full potential and gains maximum benefits from her educational experience.

I have enclosed xxx's Attendance Record for you to see and if his / her attendance does not improve I will have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer. If there is anything you wish to discuss with me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs JM Smith
Headteacher

Appendix IV

Addressee ...

Address

Date ...

Dear

I am concerned about the number of occasions that xxx has been late so far this school year. I enclose a copy of his / her Attendance Certificate for your attention together with a detailed report indicating the levels of lateness since xxx.

Regular and punctual attendance is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. I would be grateful if you could ensure that xxx arrives in good time for the beginning of school at 8.55am, as his / her continued late arrival is disruptive both for him / her and the class he / she is going into.

If xxx's punctuality does not improve I may have to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer.

If there is anything you wish to discuss with me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs JM Smith
Headteacher