

# Chipping Norton School



## WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY Non-Statutory Policy

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| <b>Reviewed by:</b>                 | Student Development and Support Committee |
| <b>Date reviewed:</b>               | June 2015                                 |
| <b>Next review:</b>                 | June 2019 (Review every four years)       |
| <b>Member of staff responsible:</b> | Natalie Hancock, Deputy Headteacher       |
| <b>Governor Responsible:</b>        | Sandra Coleman, Chair Committee           |

### INTRODUCTION

Chipping Norton School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards 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 including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

### SCHOOL PROCEDURES

1. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).
2. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

For detailed procedures and roles and responsibilities see Appendix A

### LATENESS

1. Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.40am. The registers will remain open for 50 minutes until 9.30am
2. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

3. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.25pm  
The registers will close at 1.30pm

4. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.
5. Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. Parents may wish to follow this up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.
6. When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are **outside** school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible.

### **ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

The school will contact home for all students on the first day of absence if there are no messages left explaining the absence. (Particularly important for vulnerable students)

If a student is away from school for three days without any communication from home and communication from school has not been successful then the student will be reported as a missing person. A letter will be sent home explaining the communication that has been attempted and asking the family to contact the school as a matter of urgency.

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, County Attendance Team. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

### **ABSENCE NOTES**

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

### **FREQUENT ABSENCE**

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. The Attendance Officer will liaise with the County Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. We would encourage contact with the school at this point to discuss the issues. If it continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

## **PENALTY NOTICES AND LEGAL ACTION**

### **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.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

Penalty Notice may be considered in the following circumstances:

- At least 20 sessions (10 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks
- A leave of absence that has not been approved due to exceptional circumstances during term time, of at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 5 weeks
- Persistent late arrival at school after registration is closed, equivalent to 20 sessions of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be contacted.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **A WELCOME BACK**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work.

## **PROMOTING ATTENDANCE**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The Home/School agreement can be used in this way.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, the Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

## **ATTENDANCE AWARDS**

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance:

- Verbal praise in Tutor time
- Celebration Assemblies
- Lunch Queue rewards

## **ATTENDANCE TARGETS**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

## **CATEGORISATION OF ABSENCE**

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

### **1. Unauthorised Absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

### **2. Authorised Absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

## **APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

This policy will be monitored by the Student Support Committee and a report made to the governing body. It will be reviewed every four years. The review will consider the impact of attendance on academic achievement of individuals and of groups. It will also be reviewed in terms of behaviour and inclusion. Exclusions will also be discussed at every Student Support Committee meeting as these also impact upon the attendance figures.