



Leadership Team:

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Dear Parents and Carers

As a school we are committed to ensuring that each and every one of our students has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and we know that this starts with great attendance. Being in school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing and wider development and increases connectedness and builds a sense of belonging. Supporting our students to achieve great attendance is a **team effort**, it requires us all to play our part, from the students themselves, to our entire school staff and of course parents and carers. Together we can create an environment that encourages our students to value attending school on time and regularly. As we begin a new academic year, this is a perfect opportunity for us to share with you some useful information about our attendance strategies. Our full Attendance Policy can be found on our website by [following this link](#).

We all recognise the importance of attending school regularly but equally that from time-to-time absence may simply be unavoidable. Where your child is absent due to illness or injury, we ask that you follow these steps.

1. Notify us as soon as possible. You can report your child's absence using any of the following methods:
 - Call us on our 24hr Absence line on **01608 656854**
 - Email us at absence@chippingnortonschool.org
 - Use our website to report an absence, with the following link
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScTgTc4bFVFFfIJ00oYw53yCLHpanaBbeHqyb6SkYY_NyfTXKg/viewform
2. When notifying us please ensure you provide your child's name, tutor group and a full reason for their absence.
3. Absences should be reported as soon as possible and **always** before 9.15am
4. **Each day** of absence needs to be reported, so even if you advised us the day before, we ask that you please notify us on each and every consecutive day until your child returns.

For more guidance on when to keep your child at home due to illness, the NHS provides some excellent information, use [the following link](#) to read more.

Please note, an absence will be deemed as "unauthorised" and marked accordingly when it has not been reported and /or no reason for the absence has been provided or when the absence is for a reason that the school cannot accept, for example a shopping trip or looking after a younger child at home.

Medical and Dental Appointments

We ask that where possible, parents and carers endeavour to arrange appointments outside of the school day, except in cases of urgency. We understand that hospital and orthodontist appointments are often dictated by the clinic or practice, however, please do avoid keeping students out of school for a whole day unless absolutely necessary. Mid-morning or after lunch appointments are preferable and allow students to attend school before the appointment and return to school after the appointment.

If an appointment is unavoidable during school time, please ensure that we are notified using the methods detailed above as early as possible and always in advance of the appointment.



Holidays During Term time

You will have received a separate letter from the Headteacher outlining the school's position regarding term time holidays. We actively discourage students from being absent from school for the purpose of holidays during the academic year and ***generally these will be unauthorised*** except in a few very exceptional circumstances. All such requests must be made in writing to the Headteacher for consideration, please send all requests to absence@chippingnortonschool.org at the earliest opportunity, outlining the reasons for the request, the dates to and from and any other relevant information.

Absences for other exceptional circumstances

We recognise that from time to time a student may be required to be absent from school for other exceptional circumstances such as attending an external exam, representing at a sporting or other event, attending an interview etc. In all instances the Headteacher must authorise these absences and therefore, we ask that you inform us in writing to absence@chippingnortonschool.org, outlining the reason for absence (with evidence if applicable) and date/s. We will consider each request on its individual merits and will advise you if the absence is authorised in advance.

Arriving Late

Our school day begins at **8.40am** and our registers are taken in the morning at **8.45am**. Our morning register closes at **9.15am**. Students arriving after 8.40am will need to sign in at Reception and will be asked to provide a reason for their late arrival. If you are aware that your child is going to arrive late to school, we ask that you advise us using one of the above contact methods in advance. Students arriving after 8.45am **but before** 9.15am without a valid reason will be recorded as "Late"(L). Students arriving **after 9.15am** without a valid reason, will be recorded as "Unauthorised" Late (U).

Attendance Marks

Our register is taken twice each day, once at 8.45am and again at 12.35pm meaning that there are two attendance marks for each day (known as instances). Current year to date attendance information can be found on Satchel One and will show you any unauthorised absences. When looking at the number, please remember that this is showing instances as opposed to days. For example, if a student is marked unauthorised for one day, it will be recorded as two instances based on the am and pm register.

How we will communicate with you about attendance concerns.

As a school we encourage all students to strive to achieve a minimum of **96%** attendance throughout the academic year. We all recognise the importance of attending school regularly but equally that from time-to-time absence may simply be unavoidable. The earlier we are able to identify and address any potential barriers, issues or concerns which may be impacting a student's attendance the more positive the outcome and we know that by working in partnership with parents, carers and the students themselves in an open, honest and supportive way we can overcome these issues. We have a number of processes in place to support us in achieving our aims.

1. First Day calls - Our Pastoral Team/ Attendance Lead will contact parents/carers of any students whose absence cannot be accounted for each day. You may receive a call or an email on the day and would ask that you respond as soon as possible. Failing to do so will result in the absence being recorded as **unauthorised**.
2. For students who have been absent for more than 3 days, our Pastoral Teams will make a welfare call to check in on how the student is doing and establish if there is anything we can do to support.
3. For students who are absent for prolonged periods of time (more than 7 days), we will put in place a weekly check in which will involve either a home visit or video call.

4. If a student has had more than 10 days absent, we will write to you in the first instance offering the opportunity to raise with us any concerns or barriers that may be affecting your child.
5. Where a student has had more than 19 days absence, we will invite you to attend a meeting in school to discuss and identify any barriers that may be contributing to the absence.
6. Where a student's attendance continues to fall, consideration will be given to inviting you to participate in an Attendance Contract. This is a more formal supportive agreement that enables us to set a clear plan in place to help the student improve their attendance.
7. As a school we work very closely with Oxfordshire County Council Attendance Team and where we feel it appropriate will refer some cases to them for further support and intervention.

Fines and Penalties

Our aim is always to work **collaboratively** with students and parents to support improved attendance and avoid the necessity for fines or penalties. We have outlined above, how we will work with you to support students to improve their attendance, however in instances where there is little or no improvement despite these interventions or where there have been 10 instances (5 days) of unauthorised absences over a rolling 10 week period) it may be necessary for us to issue a Notice to Improve letter. The student will then have **30 school days** in which to improve their attendance. If there are any further instances of unauthorised absence during this time, then it may be necessary for us to make a referral to the County Council, which ultimately may result in a fine being issued. A penalty notice is charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. There is usually the opportunity to pay a reduced amount of £80 if paid within 21 days.

Recognition and Rewards

We love to celebrate success at Chipping Norton school and throughout the year we have a number of fantastic initiatives to reward and recognise great attendance achievements. These initiatives are designed to be fully inclusive and to recognise not only those who achieve excellent attendance but also those students who are working hard to make consistent improvements. These include:

- Attendance certificates sent out to all students who have 95% or above attendance at the end of every term.
- Postcards home and House Points awarded for students who have shown great resilience in working towards improving their attendance.
- Keep Your Streak - An ongoing initiative that rewards students with a raffle ticket to enter into one of our fantastic prize draws held at Christmas, Easter and End of Year. Raffle tickets are awarded for every 6 consecutive weeks of either consistently improving attendance or maintaining 100% attendance. Last year we gave away an Xbox, Bike, VR Headset and Beats to name just a few of the wonderful prizes.
- Special recognition for 100% attendance with Golden Tickets and more.
- "Happiest Minute of the week" - Rewarding a randomly selected student each week for attending school.

We hope you have found the information contained in this letter useful in explaining how we as a school are committed to all of our students achieving the very best levels of attendance and how you can help us meet that target. Please remember we are always here to help and support both you and your child, so please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Wishing you a wonderful new school year

Kind regards

S Whyte

Attendance Lead

