

CHOWBENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



Date policy agreed by Governing body:

Date for review:

Chowbent Primary Attendance Policy

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. We have set our school attendance target for the academic year 2024 – 2025 at 96%

2. Legislation and guidance.

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996 Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance.

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Mrs Catherine Taylor**.

3.4 The school office staff

The school office staff will:

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level by generating attendance reports on a half termly basis.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher and designated senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Makes first day absence phone calls and records on CPOMS.
- Send home letters regarding attendance and lates as requested.

The attendance administration support staff is **the Admin Officer**.

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3.5 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:30 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.6 Class teachers.

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. This is to be completed before 9:00am and 1:15pm daily.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time – children should be in school at 8.50 am each morning.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register. We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Leave of absence can be applied for by filling out a form which is available from the school office. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. Registration is between 8.50 am and 9.00am. A late mark will be given to any child who arrives between 9.01 am and 9.20 am.
- After the register has closed at 9.20 am the child will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Continued punctuality issues are addressed by phone calls home by the school office staff and / or Headteacher /attendance senior Lead.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence by 9:30am to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may need to contact the police, depending on the circumstances
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance records are shared with parents in the child's annual end of year report and when mini reports are issued. Contact is made with parents / carers by the Attendance senior Lead as a child's attendance starts to become a concern.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

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5.1 Approval for term-time absence The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The Headteacher may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:
 - Illness and medical/dental appointments (see section 4.3 for more detail)
 - Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
 - Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Unauthorised absences will be followed up at 9:30 by the Office staff on the day of the absence and closely monitored by the Headteacher and Attendance senior Lead, resulting in warning letters and / or phone calls, which can lead to penalty notices. See legal sanctions.

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5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or notice to improve, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. A Notice to Improve can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a Notice to Improve may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
 - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
 - Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

School actions:

- 6 absences for any reason within a 10 week rolling period – school will write to parents to inform them that they are near the 10 absence threshold and to share with them what school's actions will be if they cross that threshold.
- 10 absences for any reason within a 10 week rolling period – school will seek to work with parents to explore reasons for the absences and work up a plan to improve attendance. School may require evidence to support absences due to illness, such as doctor's letter/appointment cards/proof of medication.
- 10 unauthorised absences for any reason, including lates within a rolling ten week period – penalty notice must be considered. School will first seek to work with parents to explore reasons for the absences and to agree a plan with parents to improve attendance. If there is no engagement from parents in this process then a Notice to Improve will be issued.
- 10 absences due to holiday – a Notice to Improve will be issued.

A child who has more than 15 days (30 sessions) absence within a school year due to illness, school will seek to determine the reasons for this. School must discuss the child with the Local Authority's attendance officer to determine what actions should be taken.

A Notice to Improve is a fine which is liable for each child, and each parent (including step parents/partners living with the child) who will each be issued with their own separate personal fine. The fine will be £80 if paid within 21 days. Rising to £160 if not.

If a child's attendance incurs a second fine within a rolling 3 year period (from the first fine being issued), then a fine will be at the charge of £160 per child per parent, with no reduction for early payment.

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If a child's attendance incurs a third fine within a rolling 3 year period (from the first fine being issued) further enforcement will be taken.

Note that there are two attendances per day, morning and afternoon sessions. Therefore, absence of one day will count as two absences. Also, if a child arrives at school after 9.30, or 1.30 in the afternoon, the whole of that am or pm session will be recorded as an absence.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The importance of good attendance is highlighted in Personal Development lessons, assemblies and parents' teacher meetings. Attendance figures and procedures are published regularly on the school website.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Senior Attendance Lead at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The pupil's parent / carer is expected to call the school each day that their child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above the absence thresholds, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an Local Authority's Education Link Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board. The school collects and stores attendance data through our MIS system. It is used to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause of concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

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- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing body.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance.

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the child's class teacher(s), and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Children Missing in Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have; Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

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Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation (including travel to conflict zones), and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life; Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Statutory guidance for local authorities: Children missing education (September 2016). These 'missing' children can be vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and reengage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish the reasons for the child being missing at the earliest possible stage.

Possible reasons why a child is missing education include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system;
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent/carers;
- Failure to complete a transition between schools;
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families;
- Children from families who are highly mobile;
- Children experiencing mental health problems;
- Children at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect.

Chowbent Primary School will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority. In the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, and there are no immediate safeguarding concerns, the Head Teacher will inform the Local Authority Attendance Link Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive schools days without provision of reasonable explanation.

Chowbent Primary School has a safeguarding duty in respect of our pupils, and this includes investigating any unexplained absences.

Chowbent Primary School will notify the local authority within 5 days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.

Chowbent Primary School will provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

Chowbent Primary School will notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, Chowbent Primary School has in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords - private or social housing providers - and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have

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completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care (and the Police if appropriate).

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biannually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies: Safeguarding policy Behaviour policy.

Appendix 1:

- Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code Definition & Scenario

/ Present (am) Pupil is present at morning registration

\ Present (pm) Pupil is present at afternoon registration

L Late arrival Pupil arrives late before register has closed

B Off-site educational activity Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school

D Dual registered Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

J Interview Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P Sporting activity Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school

V Educational trip or visit Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school

W Work experience Pupil is on a work experience placement

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- Code Definition & Scenario

A Authorised absence

C Authorised leave of absence Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E Excluded Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

H Authorised holiday Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I Illness School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M Medical/dental appointment, pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R Religious observance Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

T Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school Unauthorised absence

G Unauthorised holiday Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

N Reason not provided Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)

O Unauthorised absence School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

U Arrival after registration Pupil arrived at school after the register closed.

- Code Definition & Scenario

X Not required to be in school Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

Z Pupil not on admission register. Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

Planned school closure Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday