




Attendance Policy

Date adopted by the governing body	23 rd September 2024
Date to be reviewed	September 2026
Signed: Chair of Governors	
Signed: Headteacher	Becky Reed

Aims

Good attendance is essential for a child to reach their full educational potential. At Chantry, we work hard to provide the highest quality education for all our pupils in an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Every child has a legal right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents/carers and schools share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

To take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered at Chantry, it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, relationships with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Sometimes families face barriers to school attendance, and we want to work together with parents/carers to overcome these and support good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence
- pupils who attend regularly make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school and secondary school

To help promote good attendance we will:

- build strong relationships with and work jointly with families
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletter, by Parent email and on the website
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and rate is and how this relates to their attainment
- Meet with parents and offer support when attendance is low
- Work with other agencies to support families where appropriate

Attendance Champion

A member of the Senior Leadership Team (Becky Reed) is Chantry's Attendance Champion. She will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. Together with the attendance team, she will ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. The Attendance Champion will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers any barriers to attendance and any support that can be put in place.

Responsibilities of school staff

- ensure that all pupils are registered accurately
- promote and celebrate the good attendance of pupils
- work with families to overcome barriers to good attendance
- liaise with the Attendance Champion
- communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- support pupils who have been absent with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Parents will:

- ensure their child attends school on time, every day, unless too unwell to do so
- inform the school on the first day of absence by telephone 01424 211696, or email school@chantryprimary.org
- discuss with the headteacher planned absences well in advance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 97% attendance each year
- avoid taking family holidays in term time
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments

Lateness:

It is important to be on time at the start of every day. Lessons start from 9.35am and if your child is late, they will miss important learning time. It also causes disruption to the learning of others and pupils can find it embarrassing to arrive late which can then lead to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8.35 a.m. and all **pupils are expected to be arrive in school between 8.35 and 8.45am.**
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with East Sussex County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists' appointments must be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as an **unauthorised absence and fines can be issued**. Parents or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss any support that is needed to ensure their child is in school on time.

If lateness persists parents or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support available. Following this, a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10-week period, the school will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with 'East Sussex County Penalty Notice Guidance for schools and academies.

What to do if my child is absent?

If your child is absent, you must:

- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day if your child is unwell or absent from school for any other reason

If your child is absent, we will:

- contact you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. Please ensure that we always have an up-to-date contact number so that we can contact you.
- If we cannot contact you, we will use the contact details of other family members and friends which you have provided.
- If we can't contact you, we may carry out a welfare check at the family home.

Second day absence

If, after a day, contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers and your child has not been seen, we will make all reasonable enquiries to contact, including making enquiries to wider family or visiting the family home.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of being missing'.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, this is defined as ***persistent absence***. Absence for whatever reason, disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/ her learning. Research shows these gaps significantly affect attainment.

We monitor all absences carefully and attendance data is shared with the local authority, DCAT and the Department for Education. If your child has had significant absence or their attendance level is falling, we will contact you and will:

- invite you in/telephone you to discuss the situation with our attendance team. During this meeting we will discuss the reasons for absence and any support which we can put in place to improve attendance.
- If support has already been put in place and attendance hasn't improved we will complete an Attendance Contract which will set out what the parent/carer and school are doing to

support your child's attendance. Following this, their attendance will be monitored and reviewed.

- If 10 unauthorised sessions occur within 10 school weeks of the meeting, the school will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with 'East Sussex County Penalty Notice Guidance for Schools and Academies'.
- If absence continues to be an issue following a penalty notice being issued, the school may refer the matter to outside agencies for further support

Term-time holidays

From August 2024 term-time holidays cannot be authorised, as laid out in new guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

A family holiday disrupts a child's learning. In addition, children returning from a term-time absence generally require additional time from teachers to catch up on the teaching they have missed. This can have an impact on the education of other pupils in their class.

The DfE only allows a Headteacher the discretion to authorise an absence if they believe that there are **exceptional circumstances** e.g. the death of a parent. These are rare. We do not count visiting family members, restricted leave dates from work, birthdays, mistaken dates for term time or other similar reasons as exceptional circumstances. As a school we have many parents whose work may limit their leave dates but we know that employers are mindful to ensure that where possible employees with children can have some leave during a year in school holiday times.

Parents/carers wishing to take their child on holiday in term time will need to complete an absence request form at least 14 days before the proposed absence. If it is considered not to be an exceptional circumstance, it will be unauthorised and the Headteacher will request the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice. This is a fine of £160 per parent for each child - the fine is reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. If the fine is unpaid, court action can follow.

If term-time leave is taken the following year, fines are increased to £160 per parent for each child. In subsequent years, legal action can be taken against the parent.