



Choppington Primary School  
– a happy place to be –

# **Choppington Primary School**

# **Attendance Policy**

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## **1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 The Governing Board or Trustees**

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

### **2.2 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

### **2.3 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

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Gail Broderick and can be contacted via 01670 823197 or [admin@choppington.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:admin@choppington.northumberland.sch.uk)

## **2.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Claire Laskey and can be contacted via Education Welfare, Virtual School, telephone:01670 622800 email [EducationWelfareServ@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:EducationWelfareServ@northumberland.gov.uk)

## **2.5 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 by 9.25 am for morning registration and 1:15pm for afternoon registration

## **2.6 School admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- 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 pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

## **2.7 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 9am on the day of the 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

## **2.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

# **3. Recording attendance**

## **3.1 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 second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm.

### **3.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

Parents can call the school and either speak to a member of staff or leave an absence message.

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.

### **3.3 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.

Parents should complete an absence form once they know about the appointment but make every effort to ensure the child attends before or after the appointment if possible.

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.

### **3.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

When arriving late, the child **MUST** be signed in by an adult via the office.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

### **3.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the pastoral officer may visit the home to complete a welfare check.
- 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 or relevant professionals.

### **3.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during the termly assertive mentoring meetings.

Should a pupil be subject of an attendance improvement plan, attendance will be reviewed weekly.

## 4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 4.1 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events which are unavoidable such as; bereavement of a close family member or difficult family circumstances. The headteacher may use discretion in granting leave and each application for term-time absence is considered individually, taking into account the welfare of the child, specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks in advance of the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- 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

### 4.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address

### 4.3 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 penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice 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.

## 5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Class teachers and support staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and parent/carers through class discussion, assemblies, parent/carer meetings and school interactive displays
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach, strategies and interventions which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage pupils to attend and achieve. A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance.

- Comply with the Registration Regulations England 2006 and all other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of pupils, including those educated off-site.
- Celebrate good attendance in class daily and as a whole school, weekly, termly and yearly.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

Pupil's attendance is monitored weekly and half-termly, to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform school/partnership strategies to improve attendance and attainment. Pupil level data will indicate where a pupils attendance has remained the same, improved or deteriorated and trigger school action.

The data may be shared with the Local Authority, Department for Education or any agency pertinent to a pupil's welfare.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **6.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level to identify causes and patterns of absence
  - Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
  - Work with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies to improve attendance to support pupils and families if required
- 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.

At Choppington Primary School we define our key levels of attendance in Assertive Mentoring Reports in a colour coding format which helps staff, parents and pupils have a clear understanding of our expectations.



|                             | Attendance                  | Punctuality                     |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Exceptional</b>          | Attendance is 99% or higher | Never late (0-5 mins)           |
| <b>Good</b>                 | Attendance is 96%.          | Rarely late (6-15 mins)         |
| <b>Room for Improvement</b> | Attendance falls below 96%. | Frequently late (16 – 30 mins)  |
| <b>Cause for Concern</b>    | Attendance is below 90%.    | Very frequently late (>30 mins) |

# ATTENDANCE

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

### ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Children are required by law to attend school 190 days per year. The Government states that every pupil's attendance should be at least 95%.

How do YOU measure up?

| Attendance | Days Absent | Weeks Absent | Lessons Missed |
|------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|
| 95%        | 9 Days      | 2 Weeks      | 50 Lessons     |
| 90%        | 19 Days     | 4 Weeks      | 100 Lessons    |
| 85%        | 29 Days     | 6 Weeks      | 150 Lessons    |
| 80%        | 38 Days     | 8 Weeks      | 200 Lessons    |
| 75%        | 48 Days     | 10 Weeks     | 250 Lessons    |
| 70%        | 57 Days     | 11.5 Weeks   | 290 Lessons    |
| 65%        | 67 Days     | 13.5 Weeks   | 340 Lessons    |

89% & Below  
Drastic effect on  
academic achievement

95% - 90%  
Cause for  
concern

100% - 96%  
Excellent



## 6.2 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

## 6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, 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

## 6.4 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 information sharing opportunities for staff
- Provide the parents/carers with an initial alert letter of closer monitoring, should a pupils attendance be flagged in the amber zone
- Provide the opportunity to regularly share information and formulate strategies of support with parents/carers 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
- Implement and monitor appropriate agreed engagement strategies/support packages

Further strategies of support to consider

- Mentor support
- Pupil voice activities
- Tailored reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Behaviour support
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

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

## 8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## 10. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where mental health issue is affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#)

## 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 |

|          |                               |   |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>L</b> | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| <b>B</b> | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| <b>D</b> | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| <b>J</b> | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| <b>P</b> | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| <b>V</b> | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| <b>W</b> | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement   |

| <b>Code</b>               | <b>Definition</b>           | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |  |
| <b>C</b>                  | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| <b>E</b>                  | Excluded                    | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made         |
| <b>H</b>                  | Authorised holiday          | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>I</b>                  | Illness                     | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness        |

|                             |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>M</b>                    | Medical/dental appointment        | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment   |
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance   |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school   |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | 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) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>Y</b>    | 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 |

|          |                                 |   |
|----------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Z</b> | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school                 |
| <b>#</b> | Planned school closure          | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |