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# Attendance Policy

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Chew Valley School

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## **Chew Valley School Attendance Policy**

### **Rationale**

We believe that if students are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is crucial. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

Chew Valley School follows the Government's Guidance on the Education (Student Registration – England) Regulations 2006.

It is the policy of Chew Valley School to celebrate achievement. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our students. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our students.

Chew Valley School will give a high priority to emphasising to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Chew Valley School defines regular attendance as attending school every day of the academic year during the times of the school day.

We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers, students and Education Welfare Services to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

### **Principles**

- We will ensure all staff are aware of the registration procedures.
- Tutors will complete accurate registration processes at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, regular teaching staff will complete electronic registers at the start of every lesson, including the start of the afternoon session.
- Heads of Year and Assistant Heads of Year will be involved in tracking and monitoring registration periods conducted by tutors.
- Parents/carers will be encouraged to contact the School office early on the first day of absence and each day of absence thereafter to update the School.
- Attendance rates will be shared with Heads of Year/Assistant Heads of Year and good and improved attendance will be rewarded for all students.
- Positive staff attitudes to students returning after absence will be expected.
- All members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service will be consulted when developing and maintaining the whole school Attendance Policy.
- Attendance procedures will be regularly evaluated by the Attendance Team, Heads of Year and Assistant Head (Students and Inclusion). The Attendance Administrator will give regular reports to assist the Assistant Headteacher who in turn will provide a termly report to the Headteacher which will be presented to the Governors' Curriculum & Pupils Committee.
- Parents/carers and students will be informed of attendance rates and related issues.
- We will ensure all students feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a student is absent she/he will be missed.

- We will have procedures that allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

## Performance

There are two types of attendance performance we evaluate, being:

- Overall School attendance rate
- Individual student's attendance rate being over 95% - this being the figure school deems to be acceptable.

Any attendance under 90% is the figure the Government deems to be a persistent absence from school

Our overall attendance rate will be set annually in consultation with the Assistant Headteacher (Students and Inclusion), Education Welfare Service and the Attendance Officer.

Each year the Governors' Curriculum and Pupils Committee will check whether the target was met and, if not, try to establish why.

Individual student's attendance will start to be monitored and reviewed when a student's attendance figure falls below 95%.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child receives full-time education. *"Parents have a duty to educate their children "suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs which they may have" either by regular attendance at school or otherwise under Section 7 of The Education Act 1996. "Parents whose children are registered at school are then responsible for ensuring that they attend punctually, regularly and stay at school" - Section 7 of The Education Act 1996.*

An appropriate course of action to improve a student's attendance in school will be discussed with the Heads of Year and implemented immediately. The school may involve the Education Welfare Service where a student's attendance falls below 90%, which the Government deems to be a persistent absence.

As a school we will regularly review each student's attendance and punctuality internally. All students will fall into one of 3 categories:

- 96% Attendance - no concern
- 90 – 95% Attendance – concern raised, attendance monitored
- Under 90% - persistent absentee

If a child's attendance falls below 90% or they have attendance above 90%, but have a number of broken weeks of education, the school will seek to raise attendance by meeting with parents/carers or writing to parents/carers and agreeing strategies for improvements. This will enable the school to support the family in improving the child's punctuality and/or attendance.

The definition of broken weeks is as follows: when a student may only have had one day off in a particular week for a number of weeks in the year, but these have added up to a number of absences which may be detrimental to their education.

In line with statutory requirements of Section 444 Education Act, 1996, parents/carers could be liable for actions such as the issuing of a Penalty Notice or School can recommend the matter goes before a Magistrates Court if there is no improvement. Chew Valley School will only take this course of action once all other strategies and interventions have failed. Part of the Governors

evaluation process will be to look at what interventions have been successful, this will include considering:

- Attendance data for individual students, tutor groups and the school as a whole
- Has the behaviour of students improved? (Use of SIMS Behaviour Management System)
- How successful have student re-inclusion plans been?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the community?
- How well informed are new students about the importance of attendance and the policy and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?

We will strive to raise the profile of attendance through the issue of individual certificates for 100% attendance and improved attendance and through the monitoring of tutor group attendance.

Throughout the year we will continually review all students' cases. Chew Valley School believes that it is essential to keep this policy "alive". Consultation and communication are key factors that will ensure that the Policy has impact in raising attendance. Vigilance is essential if we are to maintain and improve our attendance figures.

### **First Day Contact**

First day contact is an integral part of the Attendance Policy.

This procedure will be most effective if it is applied to every absence and gives a clear message that absences are not allowed for reasons other than those determined by the law. The procedure and the need for it should be understood by all and the school will do this by regularly writing to parents. It is the view of the school that 'first day contact' works by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of full attendance
- Addressing problems before they become serious
- Improving home-school liaison
- Sending a clear message to parents/carers and students that if a student is absent, they will be missed
- Alerting parents/carers who may be unaware that their child is truanting and therefore may be at risk
- Requiring and promoting a high level of communication within the School
- Reducing the number of students who have short-term absence, thereby reducing the overall absence rate
- Assisting parents/carers and students to develop habits that reduce casual absence and encouraging early contact from parents/carers.

Parents/carers are encouraged to use the Insight Parent Portal to notify the school of their child's absence before 8.30am. If unable to access the internet, parents should telephone the school office (01275 332272) and press 1 for student absences before 8:30am, giving their child's

- Name
- Tutor group
- Reason for absence

Full reasons for the child's absence should be given – reporting a student “not well” does not constitute a full reason.

If the parent/carer has not contacted the school by 8.30am, the parents/carers of the students identified as absent will be contacted by the Attendance Team.

Parents/carers will be challenged if they fail to inform the school of the reasons for absence, or if the reasons given for absence are unacceptable.

### **Main types of absence**

- **Authorised Absence:** An absence with an explanation from parents/carers.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** An absence not agreed or unexplained. The School will attempt to obtain reasons for unexplained absence but where parents/carers fail to respond, any unexplained absence will be deemed as unauthorised. If a student has five or more unauthorised absences within a six month period, the school may recommend to the Education Welfare Service that a Notice of Fixed Penalty is issued. They may decide to refer the matter to a Magistrates Court
- **Medical Absence:** This will usually be authorised, although the school may request a doctor's note for any absence exceeding five consecutive days.

### **Procedures**

If no contact is achieved with the parent/carer of an absent student on the first day of absence, contact will be made with the parent/carer by phone or email.

Any unexplained absences of one week or longer may be reported to the Local Authority Child Missing Education Service (CMES) and further action decided upon.

For any student returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, the school will make provision to allow the student to ease back into the school system if necessary. In the event of a student returning after a long-term absence, a Re-integration Plan may be implemented to help support the students return to school. This plan will include all relevant members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the student as possible.

Where patterns of non-attendance emerge, for example, a student missing regular Mondays or Fridays, the School will challenge these absences and reserve the right not to authorise them, even if a parent has reported a student as unwell.

The school reserves the right not to authorise absences where siblings are reported unwell.

In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school staff must make attendance a priority and convey to the students the importance of their learning. This means ensuring that all teaching staff attend regularly, arrive on time to lessons and are well prepared.

### **Lateness**

Being punctual is an important life skill to prepare a young person for the world of work.

Parents/carers are expected to ensure that students are present at the start of registration. Registration is an important part of the school day. Tutors are required to complete the registers before registration has finished. Students arriving after 8.50am and 1.40pm will be considered to be late (L code *Appendix 1*). Students arriving after 9.15am or 2.00pm will be recorded 'late after registration closes,' which counts as an unauthorised absence (U code *Appendix 1*). These

unauthorised absences will affect the student's attendance figure and they can be taken into account when deciding whether to issue Penalty Notices.

There are two negative results caused by students who constantly arrive late:

- The loss of learning suffered by the student themselves which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school.
- The disruption to other students in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task in hand.

The school will use sanctions in line with the behaviour policy to tackle lateness.

### **Penalty Notices (*Appendix 2*)**

Under section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority may issue Penalty Notices to parents/carers of children with unauthorised absences from school.

Accumulated unauthorised absences, including unauthorised holidays, may therefore result in a Penalty Notice being issued by Bath and North East Somerset Council.

The fines are issued to each parent/carer, for each child, and are:

£60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Only in very limited circumstances can a Penalty Notice, once issued, be withdrawn.

Failure to pay the fine will result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. The court can fine a parent/carer up to £2,500 and the court can also offer a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

### **Holiday in Term Time**

With effect from the 1st September 2013, the law no longer gives any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time and Headteachers can no longer grant any extended leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If the Headteacher does not authorise an absence, but the child is still absent, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice Fine being issued (*Appendix 2*).

If a student has been absent and the reason has been reported as illness but the school has reason to believe this not to be the case and the student is actually attending a family holiday, we may require evidence of illness. If illness cannot be proved, the school may take action by way of a Penalty Notice.

If a parent wishes to request a "student absence for exceptional circumstances" they must fill in a form which is made available through the attendance administrator on reception prior to the date of the requested absence.

### **Safeguarding students during school hours/truantiing off site**

There are two reasons why a student may need to leave the school site during school hours:

- Needing to attend a medical or dental appointment, college interview or approved sporting activity.
- Being sent home by the First Aider when the student is unwell

For reasons of safety and safeguarding, any student who needs to leave the school site during the school day (to attend a medical appointment for example) must be picked up on site (main reception) by a parent or carer.

Students are not permitted to walk out of school unattended without prior agreement of a parent/carer AND the School. The student must sign out with the necessary parental permission at Reception.

Should there be an exceptional reason for a student to leave the school site without being accompanied by an adult, parents/carers are asked to contact the Attendance Officer explaining the reasons for this who will then, if necessary, seek permission for a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Head of Year.

This policy will not apply to Year 11 students once they start Exam Leave (although they must sign out at Reception before they leave the school site). Any students leaving the school site without permission are classed as truanting and will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy.

When a student is unwell, the First Aider will contact parents/carers to arrange for a student to be collected. Under no circumstances will the student be allowed to leave the site unaccompanied.

#### **Related documents and Policies**

Accessibility Plan

Equalities Plan

Behaviour and Bullying Policy

SEND Policy

Medical Health Needs Policy

**Approved by: Full  
Governing Body**

**Date: January 2018**

**Last reviewed:  
January 2018**

**Next review due by:  
January 2020**

## Appendix I: Attendance Codes

<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>/</b>	<b>Present</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Educated off site ( not dual registration)</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Exceptional circumstances</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Dual registered</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Excluded where no alternative provision is made (up to day 6)</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Family holiday not agree or in excess of agreement</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Holiday agreed</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Illness</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>Interview</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>Late before registers close</b>
<b>M</b>	<b>Medical or dental appointment</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>No reason yet provided for absence</b>
<b>O</b>	<b>Unauthorised absence</b>
<b>P</b>	<b>Approved sporting activity</b>
<b>R</b>	<b>Religious observance</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>Study leave</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Traveller absence</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>Late after registration has closed</b>
<b>V</b>	<b>Educational visit or trip</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Work Experience</b>



## **Appendix 2**

### **CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION SERVICE PENALTY NOTICES - INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

#### **What is a Penalty Notice?**

Under existing legislation, parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend regularly and the absences are classed as unauthorised (those for which the school cannot or has not given permission). Depending on circumstances such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced the Penalty Notice as an alternative to prosecution. A Penalty Notice does not require an appearance in Court but still aims to secure an improvement in attendance.

Payment of a Penalty Notice enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction.

#### **Why has it been introduced?**

Reducing absence from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a student's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others and can leave a student vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities.

#### **How much will it be?**

£60 - If payment is made within 28 days. £120 - if paid after this but within 28 days. Penalty Notices may be issued to each parent of each child who has unauthorised absences. This means that the total penalty is £120 per parent per child; for example, a family of two parents and two children may receive a total penalty of £480.

#### **How will they be issued?**

By post, to the parents' home address.

#### **When will they be used?**

Penalty Notices may be used in to tackle unauthorised absence in the following circumstances:

- Where the parent has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation, especially, but not solely, where the absence will lead to the child missing public examinations i.e. SATs and GCSEs.
- Where following a truancy sweep, enquiries show that the school has recorded the student's absence for that session as unauthorised.
- In cases where students are persistently late for school after the register has closed.
- In cases where a student's parents fail to work with the school and the Children Missing Education Service to improve attendance.

Penalty notices will normally be issued where a student has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the 100 sessions prior to the request for a penalty notice to be issued. However, in some circumstances, such as Family Holidays in Term Time, a notice may be issued for any period of

unauthorised absence. Penalty notices may be issued to any or all parents as defined by section 576 of the Education Act 1996.

Parents will not be issued with more than two separate penalty notices per child in any twelve-month period.

The Children Missing Education Service does not take legal action lightly and would far rather work with parents/carers to improve attendance without having to resort to its enforcement powers. Attendance is of such importance to all of us however that these powers will be used if this will help in securing a child's education.

### **Is a Warning Given?**

Yes, parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Notice being issued, which will show the extent of the student's absences and give at least 15 school days in which to effect an improvement. In that time the student must have no unauthorised absences from school.

Where Penalty Notices are issued in respect of family holidays taken in term time, a warning will normally be given on the first occasion that such absence is not authorised by the school.

There is no limit to the number of times formal warning of possible Penalty Notice issue may be made in any particular case.

### **Is there an appeal process?**

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued, but on receipt of a warning from the school parents can contact the Deputy Headteacher/Head teacher to discuss the matter of the child's absence. •

### **How is payment made?**

Details of payment arrangements will be included on the Penalty Notice. Payment in part or by instalment is not an option with Penalty Notices.

### **What happens if payment is not made?**

Parents have up to 42 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If full payment is not received within this timescale the Authority is required under the Act to commence proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor attendance by the child.

If proven, this can result in fines of up to £2,500 and/or a range of disposals such as Parenting Orders, Community Sentences or imprisonment depending upon circumstances.

### **Can parents be prosecuted if they pay the Penalty Notice but the child is still missing school?**

Not for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges the liability in this respect. However it may be the case that a prosecution might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Notice, depending upon the circumstances. If this is an issue, it is vital that parents/carers work closely with the school and support agencies such as the Children Missing Education Service.

### **Can parents get help if their child is not attending regularly?**

Yes, the school and the Children Missing Education Service will give advice and support if they need help with their child's attendance. It is very important that parents speak with the school at the earliest opportunity if there are any worries at all about securing their child's attendance.

**For more information contact:**

Children Missing Education Service PO Box 25

Riverside

Keynsham

BS31 1DN

Tel: 01225 394241

E-mail: [CMES@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:CMES@bathnes.gov.uk)

## **Appendix 3:**

### **Parental Guidance on Attendance:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviourand-attendance>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/268648/advice\\_on\\_school\\_attendance\\_nov\\_2013.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268648/advice_on_school_attendance_nov_2013.pdf)

# Appendix 4: Chew Valley School

## Formal Attendance Processes

