



Charlton Kings Infants' School

Attendance Policy

Written by K. James & V Storey

Governor Committee Responsible:	FGB	Governor Lead:	FGB
Staff Lead	Katie James Vera Storey		
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Designation	Name	Date	Signature
Chair of Governors	Henning Schmidt		
Headteacher	Katie James		

Accessibility and Safeguarding Statement

This policy is written with reference to our Safeguarding Policy, in particular the Child Protection section. We will strive to ensure that the ethos of the school is such that everyone is equally valued and treated with respect.

Pupils will be provided with opportunities to experience, understand and value diversity.

All pupils should have access to an appropriate education that gives them the opportunity to achieve their personal potential, whatever their abilities and needs might be. Charlton Kings Infants' School is committed to providing an outstanding safe learning environment that promotes the welfare and well-being of all children. We ensure that this policy considers those children and young people with additional medical needs such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and allergies etc.

Reference to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

In order to provide the safest possible environment for children and staff to work in, we act according to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy with reference to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018' and 'Working together to Safeguard Children 2018'. We monitor and promote regular attendance as part of our policy to raise safety awareness within the school, identify hazardous situations and so prevent unnecessary risks.

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to him/her. At Charlton Kings Infants' School we take seriously our responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all our pupils. We acknowledge that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

The law concerning school attendance is set out in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The Department for Education has issued guidance on the interpretation of this law in its publication 'School attendance Guidance for schools. (A copy of this Guidance can be found on our website). Charlton Kings Infants' School follows this Government guidance.

As a school we aim to achieve 100% attendance for every child.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

We aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' successes and achievements.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Home School Agreement.

Responsibilities

Pupils

- Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.
- Attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed).

Parents

- Ensure their children attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed).
- Inform the school of their child's absence on the first day of non-attendance.
- Communicate further with school if their child's absence is longer than one day.
- Respond to any requests for information from school regarding their child's absence.
- Sign their child in at reception if late for the school day.
- Not take holidays in term time.
- Make any request for compassionate leave in writing to the head teacher.

School

The school has the responsibility to provide an environment that is conducive to educating every individual pupil. We have a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

The Local Authority

The Local Authority (LA) has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team (EEI) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EEI is the enforcement agency of the LA and, as well as providing guidance and support through its officers, may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty. The school will inform the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team of any pupil who has had a continuous period of more than 10 school days unauthorised absence. The Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team will be able to advise and give further guidance.

School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

Recording

Our registers are marked electronically in accordance with legal requirements at the beginning of each session (am/pm). The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent, the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

The school bell rings at 8.50 am and 1.00 pm. The register will remain open for fifteen minutes at the start of each session. The register officially closes at 9.05 am and 1.15 pm, and any pupil arriving after this will require a reason for their lateness and school will take the decision as to whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Children who arrive to school in the morning after 8.55am, when classroom doors are closed, or after 1.00 pm, must sign in at the school office with an explanation of their lateness so that this can be recorded. It is vital that we know exactly who is in school at all times in case there is an emergency. Please note that children will be recorded as 'late' if they arrive between 8.55am and 9.05 am or 1.05 pm and 1.15 pm.

When a child is absent it is important that parents inform school immediately (by telephone/email before 9:15 a.m.) each day of absence and with the reason for absence. We are required by law to categorise absences by marking them with a code on the register. Absences will be authorised for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observance, educational visits and other unavoidable

causes. If a child is absent and no message has been received the school secretary will contact the parents requesting an explanation for their child's absence. If no contact can be made or no reason given for the child's absence it will be recorded as unauthorised.

All absences and persistent late arrivals are regularly monitored by the attendance officer and a termly report is produced by the head teacher. The parents/carers of the children with attendance of less than 90% at any given point of the academic year will receive a warning letter (Appendix 1 – letter 1). If poor attendance persists, the attendance officer will follow this up with a second letter (Appendix 2 – letter 2). If attendance does not improve, a formal invitation inviting the parents/carers to an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with the head teacher to discuss their child's poor attendance will be sent (Appendix 3). Should poor attendance continue to persist then the attendance officer will follow procedure for Legal Action set out by Education Entitlement and Inclusion team.

It is our legal duty to report to the LA continuous pupil absences of more than two weeks and on those pupils who fail to attend regularly.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The DCSF Guidance on Applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations (October 2007) identifies the following reasons as acceptable for recording as authorised absence:

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart for religious observance in their parent's / carer's particular faith
- The child is absent 'with leave' e.g. dance/music examinations, family weddings, prison visits etc.

Medical/Dental appointments: Where possible, parents should make every effort to make appointments outside of the school day.

Educated elsewhere: On certain occasions if it is necessary for a child to be temporarily educated at another school or at a hospital school. This also applies to visits to prospective new schools.

Serious disruption to travel arrangements and School closure: This has a distinct code and there are specific instances where this code will apply. The code should be used at the Head Teacher's discretion and would apply to a weather-related emergency, such as snow or flooding. It would also apply to a natural disaster, such as the impact on air travel of a volcanic eruption.

Exclusion: As exclusion for a fixed period results from a decision taken by the school, the absence should be treated as authorised.

Religious Observance

Under the regulations, schools must authorise absence that is due to religious observance but the day must be:

- Exclusively set apart for religious observance; and
- set apart by the parents' religious body (not the parents)

If the religious body sets apart a single day for religious observance and the pupil applies for 4 days leave of absence the school is only required to allow one day; the rest is discretionary leave. All requests for discretionary leave must be made in advance by pupils' parents.

Lateness (after the register closes) without what the DCSF describes as an 'adequate explanation' must also be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If a pupil is frequently late before registration closes, the matter will be discussed with the parent. The class or Head Teacher will raise the issue with the parents to establish a partnership to improve punctuality. If the lateness continues, the Head Teacher will write to invite the parents/carers to a meeting to discuss how school can support improved punctuality.

Under existing legislation, parents or carers commit an offence if a child after their 5th birthday fails to attend school and their absences are not authorised by the school. 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.

It is unauthorised absence from school that carries with it the risk of prosecution.

Reasons such as shopping, birthday treats, siblings' birthdays and holidays are not unavoidable causes warranting authorised absence.

Holidays in term time

There is an expectation that parents **should not** take pupils on holiday during term time. This has a detrimental effect on a pupil's attainment and therefore their life chances

At Charlton Kings Infants' School the head teacher and governors have the discretion to authorise holidays during term time that meet the exceptional circumstances criteria. Exceptional circumstances means that the vast majority of requests will be refused and, if the holiday is taken anyway, this will constitute an unauthorised absence which may result in the issue of a penalty notice.

A written request, to the head teacher, must be made from a person with parental responsibility for all absence requests during term time. All requests for leave of absence are treated on a case by case basis.

Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively and any absence without advance permission will therefore be recorded as unauthorised.

The table below identifies the unauthorised codes used in the attendance register.

Code	Explanation	Additional notes
G	Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period	If the pupil is kept off school longer than agreed. Regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	All unexplained absences should be followed up. Once reason is established the register should be amended.
O	Absent from school without authorisation	
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	After 9.00am or 1.35pm

Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA officers, Headteachers (and deputies and assistants authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.

A Penalty Notice can be issued in cases of unauthorised absence, and may be appropriate where holidays have been taken in term time where the school has not authorised the absence or in cases of persistent late arrival at school.

Before a Penalty Notice is considered a pupil must have had a least ten sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence recorded against their name within a 10 week period immediately preceding the request. Further details about Penalty Notices can be found in the Gloucestershire County Council Penalty Notice Protocol.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2083564/appendix-5-leaflet-for-parents-penalty-notices-nov-2018.pdf>

If the Penalty Notice is not paid, prosecution will proceed under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is implemented. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. The governors set annual targets for authorised and unauthorised absence, and rates of attendance will be reported annually.

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If they have concerns about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian. The appropriate support will be offered to parents/carers by the school in order to ensure any concerns regarding a child's attendance are addressed immediately (eg through the 'Early Help' graduated pathway). Information for parents and carers regarding 'Early Help' can be found on our school website:

<https://www.ckis.org.uk/page/?title=Early+Help&pid=230>