



# The Chalfonts Community College

## Attendance for Learning Policy

<b>Approved by:</b>	SLA Committee	<b>Date:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2022
<b>Created</b>	May 2022	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	September 2023	

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## **1. Mission Statement**

Regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

We promote full attendance and will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying and Behaviour for Learning.

## **2. Aims**

Our school aims to meet its obligations concerning school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance (a minimum of 95%) and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- To raise the profile of the importance of good attendance and punctuality amongst students, parents and staff
- To outline procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality
- To reduce persistent absences and lateness

## **3. Legal Framework**

The 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

We have a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was:

- Present or absent
- present at approved educational activity; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Parents/Carers will receive an automated e-mail after morning registration to alert them to any unexplained absences. Subject teachers also record attendance and punctuality in their lessons so that post registration truancy can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## 4. 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.

## 5. School procedures

### 5.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during a later session. It will mark whether every student 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.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

- Students must arrive **in** school by **8.35am** on each school day.
- The register for the morning session will be taken at **8.45am**.
- The register for the afternoon session will be taken at the commencement of Lesson 4

NB: These times may be subject to change in exceptional circumstances

## 5.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by **8.45am** or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

The Attendance Officer will update Arbor once authorisation has been received by the parent; this is normally after a telephone call with the parent. However, if the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents cannot authorise absence. This decision rests with the school in accordance within the boundaries set by The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996 and updated 2006. Where deemed necessary the school reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

## 5.3 Punctuality

All parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school punctually. This establishes good practice for their future working life.

Registration period starts promptly at 8.45am. At this time, all students are expected to be in their classrooms and ready to start the registration period.

Arrival AFTER these times causes delays to starting registration for all other students in that classroom.

The access gates are closed after this time and late students must sign in at Reception and give a reason for their lateness.

Lateness into school on a regular basis carries the following penalties:

- Late to school carries a Lunchtime Detention on the same day
- 2 or more lates into school within a one-week period carries an After-School Detention consequence; which are run by Subject Leaders/Heads of Year and SLT on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays.

We value the support given by our parents/cares in ensuring that their child's attendance is above 95% and that their child is punctual to school and lessons. We are aware that, at times, lateness may occur – especially if the child travels by public/school transport. In these cases; late marks will not be given to the child as the fault lies with public transport. All other lateness will incur a late mark in the register.

## 5.4 Planned appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please inform the Attendance Officer of any absences on 01753 882032 then select option 2 or e-mail: [attendance@chalfonts.org](mailto:attendance@chalfonts.org)

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance using the 'Leave of Absence' forms available on the school's website.

## 5.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

## 5.6 Truancy

- If a student is found to be truanting a lesson within the school site or off school site then they will be disciplined in line with the school's 'Behaviour for Learning' policy. This policy can be found on the school website.
- If a student goes missing during the school day, the Attendance Officer will try to locate the student. This will mean checking they are not with the School Nurse, Pastoral/SEND Teams or in any other meeting or music lesson etc. Toilets will be checked and a general walk of the site will be conducted. If the student still cannot be located then the safeguarding team will be informed and parents will be notified. Parents will be asked to try and contact the student on their mobile and update the school if successful. If the school has not heard from the parent within 15 minutes, the school will try and call again but if the school cannot confirm they are safe, the school is obliged to contact the police to maximise the student's safety.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider school community.

Our staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Use the attendance system to record, monitor and report the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence. Contact parents when attendance falls below 90%
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

We will request that parents/carers:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form positive relationships with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home

- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

## 6.1 The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

## 6.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## 6.3 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Year Leaders/Vice Principal (and in turn to the Principal)
- Works with education welfare officers (Buckinghamshire County Attendance Team) to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## 6.4 Subject Teachers

Subject Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office during specific times during the school day.

## 6.5 Reception staff

Reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system to support the attendance team.

## 6.6 Reporting to parents

The school issues attendance records in each academic report issued relating to the student.

## 7. Granting approval for term-time absence

The Principal (or Vice Principal in the Principal's absence) may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. The Principal will decide on whether the situation is deemed as an exceptional circumstance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (for which we may require evidence for)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller students (GRT community) 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. We work closely with the Local Authority GRT Liaison Officer to support families in ensuring that regular school attendance is promoted within the community.
- In order to maximise individual achievement parents should avoid making routine appointments for students during the school day or taking family holidays during term time. The Education (Pupil Registration - England) Regulations 2006 that came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 mean that holidays taken during term will be treated as an unauthorised absence. It is not a parental right to take a family holiday during term time.
- If parents want to request a leave of absence during term time, they will need to submit a completed ‘Leave of Absence’ form. This is found on the school website or can be obtained from reception. The school will only consider authorising an absence during term time based on individual need and exceptional circumstance and only where the following criteria have been met:
  - An application is made to the Principal in advance of the absence by a parent or carer the student lives with.
  - There are ‘exceptional circumstances’ surrounding the need to take the holiday during term time.
- Parents should be advised that absence without the consent of the school could result in further action and sanctions including a penalty notice or prosecution from the Buckinghamshire County Attendance Team.

## **8. Legal Sanctions**

- Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.
- Regular and punctual attendance of students at school is, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, a legal requirement. If a child of compulsory school age does not attend regularly and no alternative provision has been put in place; parents can be subject to penalty fine or prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty Notices can be issued for any of the following reasons:
  - A 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
  - Overt truancy - If the school feels it necessary, then cases will be referred to the Buckinghamshire County Attendance Team, which will issue and administrate the Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Legal action includes:

## **9. Penalty Notice:**

- A penalty notice may be issued to a parent for failing to ensure their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or no alternative provision is put in place.
- Penalty notices can be put in place where the student's absences are not authorised by the school. This includes holidays during term time.
- Penalty notices are issued at the Principal's discretion. The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- If the penalty is not paid in full within the 42-day period, a prosecution will be sought. (The Education (Penalty Notices - England) (Amendments) Regulations 2013). The payment must be made directly to the local authority.
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

### **9.1 Prosecution for unauthorised absence:**

- It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered student at the school. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

## **10. Support Systems**

We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life with either problems at home and/or in school. Parents/carers should make us aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, e.g. divorce, separation, bereavement. This will help us identify any additional support that may be required. We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, e.g. SEN students, those with physical or mental health needs and Looked After Children.

The school may implement some or all of the following range of strategies to support improved attendance:

- Discussion with parents/carers and students
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pastoral/Behaviour support (e.g. Outreach)
- Change of Tutor Group and/or classes
- Reward systems – certificates/postcards/merits etc for improved attendance
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and students.

## **11. Intervention for students who fall below 90%**

The Attendance Officer produces a weekly report using Arbor reporting on students who have whose attendance is below 95% attendance. This is then monitored within school over a three week period. Absence is discussed with the Year Leaders and/or Vice Principal.

If there is no good reason for attendance being this low (e.g. long-standing illness/exceptional circumstances.), then a 1a letter is sent to parents. This states that student's attendance will be monitored for three weeks.

If attendance has improved to a level that is acceptable, then a 1b letter is sent. This states that we are no longer monitoring the student's attendance, but if attendance becomes irregular again during the current academic year, then a Parenting Contract Meeting (PCM) will be held with the Attendance Officer and/or Year Leader or Vice Principal.

If attendance has not improved to an acceptable level after three weeks and a PCM is required, the Attendance Officer will arrange the meeting over the phone and send a follow up email confirming the date and time. The meeting will follow the format of the Parenting Contract documentation and will address all questions on the Parenting Contract form. At the end of the meeting the parent should sign the Parenting Contract agreeing to ensure the regular attendance of their child for the three weeks. Any refusal to do this must be recorded. The student's attendance will be monitored closely for those three weeks.

If, at the Parenting Contract review, attendance has improved to an acceptable level; the case is closed and a 1b letter sent. If attendance has not improved, then the school will need to decide whether to monitor the student's attendance for a further three weeks, and then hold a final PCM review, or to refer on to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)/County Attendance to carry out a pre-court interview with parents or issue a penalty notice.

If at any point during the PCM process parents appear to disengage i.e. do not attend meetings or are unwilling to rearrange meetings; the case can be referred to the EWS. If parents then engage with the EWS, the case may be sent back to the school to process.

## **12. Children Missing in Education**

If a child is missing from education and we have not received any contact from the family for 10 days, school will complete a CME referral and send to the Children Missing in Education Team  
E-mail: [childrenmissingineducation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingineducation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01296 383098 / 01296 382091

### **Removing a child from school roll**

The Chalfonts Community College use the Buckinghamshire Guidance – 'Removing Pupils from School Roll: Guidance for Schools' before off-rolling any child  
([www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/education-support/children-missing-education/](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/education-support/children-missing-education/))

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Vice Principal.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board for ratification.

### **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to:

- SEND
- Behaviour for Learning
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Child Looked After

## Appendix 1 : Flow Chart for Attendance



## Appendix 2 : Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I01	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
I02	Illness - Covid	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to testing positive for Covid
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 or Year 13 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half- term/bank holiday/INSET day

Date	Issue	Status	Comments
May 22		Updated and Formatted Added	Appendix 1 & 2