



The Chalfonts Community College

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims and Purpose

At Chalfonts we know that students who attend school more regularly are more likely to achieve academic success. This attendance policy is designed to ensure that we have a fair, transparent and effective system in place to identify poor attendance, and to work with students and their parents or carers in order to support them to improve their attendance.

Our attendance strategy uses this policy alongside our work on building community and ensuring students have the best curriculum experience in order to raise attendance; this policy should therefore be viewed alongside our policies for Safeguarding, Behaviour, Anti-bullying, and Curriculum.

2. 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, to use legal enforcement to ensure that this happens.

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.

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 following guidance documents:

- Working Together to improve school attendance (DfE, May 2022)
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Support Toolkit (Buckinghamshire LA, March 2023)

As well as DfE guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School Procedures

3.1 The 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 A for the DfE attendance codes. Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for at least 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Chalfonts Community College uses a school Management of Information System (MIS) to keep our register. The statutory registers are taken at the following times

- 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 period 4

3.2 Punctuality to school

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.

The access gates are closed at 8.45am and students who arrive after 8.45am must sign in at Reception, giving a reason for their lateness.

Lateness into school, without good reason and/or on a regular basis will be dealt with as follows:

- 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

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. The school reserves the right to ultimately take the decision as to whether lateness is unavoidable or not, and whether a sanction for lateness is appropriate.

3.3 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.

3.4 Planned absence for medical and dental appointments

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

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.

3.5 Planned absence for other circumstances

DfE guidelines make it clear that "Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request."

Applications for any types of absence other than medical appointments, during term time, must be made in advance using the 'Leave of Absence' forms available on the school's website, or from the school's reception.

All applications for a leave of absence during term time are all reviewed by the Principal. DfE guidelines only allow the Principal to grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday.

The Principal will approve absence for religious observance where the day is exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student and/or their parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set aside.

The Principal will approve absence for students from the school's Gypsy, Roma and/or travelling community (GRT) who are travelling for occupational purposes.

Applications for leave of absence during term time must be

- made in advance of the absence
- made by a parent or carer
- detail the "exceptional" nature of the circumstances

The Principal reserves the right to refuse to grant a leave of absence in any circumstances if a child's attendance is below 90%.

3.6 Lesson avoidance or truancy

If a student is at school, but is not in their correct lesson or in another space with staff permission (e.g. medical or pastoral) they are truanting.

If a student goes missing during the school day, the attendance team will try to locate the student, by checking areas such as medical, pastoral, Learning Support.

If the student cannot be located the safeguarding team will be informed and parents/carers will be notified. Parents will be asked to try to contact the student on their mobile phone and update the attendance team if successful. If the attendance team has not heard from the parent in fifteen minutes, they will call again. If we cannot confirm that a student is safe, we may have to contact the police in case the student has left the school site and is at risk.

If students are missing lessons repeatedly, the attendance team will contact parents and invite them in for an attendance support meeting.

4. Supporting students to improve their attendance

We understand that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. We also recognise that some students are more likely than others to require additional support in order to attend school regularly, such as children with SEND, those with mental health difficulties, looked after children, or children who have experienced trauma and/or adversity.

We ask that parents/carers make us aware of any difficulties that their child is experiencing so that we can offer support, or signpost to other appropriate agencies.

If students are experiencing medical difficulties that mean they cannot attend school, or where a medical professional has advised against school attendance, the attendance team will contact parents/carers to request an attendance support meeting. This meeting will be used to discuss how long the medical-related absence is expected to last, whether alternative provision is required during this time (see our Policy for supporting students with medical illness who cannot attend school) and whether a reduced timetable would help attend school or help reintegrate back to school following the period of absence.

Where attendance falls below 90% for a five week period, or where there are repeated cases of students missing lessons despite being in school, the attendance team will contact parents/carers to request an attendance support meeting. This meeting will be used to discuss any possible barriers to attendance, and to explore what support the school or other agencies can offer that may help the student and/or family.

Our attendance team will work with other staff in school, including the tutor, year leader, pastoral staff, safeguarding staff, and/or our SENDCo, in order to put support in place.

Where we believe that students are experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance, we will make use of the Buckinghamshire Toolkit for EBSA support, and involve the SENDCo.

Our attendance team will then monitor attendance over a three week period to see whether the support is having an impact or not.

Our approach to working with students whose attendance has fallen below 90% for five weeks is detailed in appendix B below.

5. Legal Action

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 a legal requirement under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. If a child of compulsory school age does not attend regularly parents can be subject to a 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 a holiday taken in term time without permission
- where a suspended student has been in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- overt truancy

If the school feels that legal action may be necessary, cases will be referred to the Buckinghamshire County Attendance Team, who will issue and administer the Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Penalty notices are a £60 fine, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but before 28 days. If the penalty is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority can decide to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

If the Local Authority chooses to prosecute the parent, a Magistrate can ultimately issue a fine of up to £2,500 per child, impose a Parenting Order, or impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

6. Safe and Well checks

If a student is not attending school, and we have not heard from the family, a member of staff may make a home visit to ensure that the child is safe and well.

Students may be designated as particularly vulnerable by our safeguarding team. For some students, depending on their needs and context, our safeguarding team may decide that a home visit is necessary on the first day of unexplained absence.

For most students, if we have not seen a student or heard from their family at all for three days, the attendance team will notify the safeguarding team, who may decide that a home visit is necessary.

Home visits will be undertaken by two members of staff together.

If a student cannot be seen on a home visit, the safeguarding team may decide to refer this to the police or social services.

7. Children Missing in Education (CME)

If a child is missing from school and we have not received any contact from the family for 10 days, the attendance team will complete a CME referral. This will be logged on cpoms as part of our safeguarding policy, and our safeguarding team will work with attendance on any follow up required.

8. Removing a child from the school roll

Chalfonts Community College uses the Buckinghamshire Guidance "Removing Pupils from School Roll – Guidance for Schools" before taking any child off the school roll.

8.1. Removing a child from the school roll for Elective Home Education (EHE)

Chalfonts Community College recognizes the legal right of a parent or carer to take their child off roll in order to electively home educate (EHE). If a parent or carer notifies the school that they wish to electively home educate their child, the attendance team will write to them giving them further information about Elective Home Education, and offering a further meeting to ensure that this is not a decision that the parent is making for any reason other than a genuine desire to home educate. The attendance team will also refer the family to the Year Leader or to SLT, so that any concerns around attending Chalfonts can be explored.

Where parents confirm that they do wish to electively home educate their child, the attendance team will forward their notification to the Elective Home Education team in the Buckinghamshire Local Authority.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Chalfonts Community College believe that great 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 community.

All staff will:

1. Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their families
2. Form positive relationships with students
3. Work towards our school value of community to build a powerful, positive community that makes students feel valued and want to come to school
4. For teaching staff responsible for a class register, ensure that they take the register accurately within the first ten minutes of a lesson
5. For support staff who have students visit them during lesson time, ensure that they log the
6. student's presence as an ad-hoc intervention on arbor so that their attendance is recorded

Parents/carers will:

1. Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to their children
2. Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return
3. Talk to a member of school staff if there are any barriers to good attendance, so that the school can try to support
4. Apply for a leave of absence if exceptional circumstances mean that their child needs to be away from school
5. Avoid taking their child out of school where possible

The Governing Board will:

1. Monitor attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis
2. Hold the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The Principal will:

1. Ensure this policy is implemented consistently
2. Monitor school-level absence data and report this to Governors
3. Review applications for term-time leave of absence, and fairly apply this policy in deciding whether to grant these absences

The Vice Principal will:

1. Manage the attendance team to ensure that they are implementing this policy consistently
2. Lead the development of a whole-school attendance strategy, and lead staff to implement this strategy
3. Ensure that there is close working between the attendance team and other staff in school, including year leaders, pastoral staff, the safeguarding team and SENDCo, to ensure that students who are experiencing barriers to attendance receive the support that they need

The Attendance Team will:

1. Ensure that registers are taken and, to the best of their ability, ensure that they are accurate
2. Work with parents/carers to enter the appropriate codes for absences
3. Monitor attendance data at the school and individual student level
4. Meet regularly with Year Leaders, The VP for Pastoral/SEND, Safeguarding, and the SENDCo to inform them of any relevant issues for students that they are responsible for
5. Work with the Local Authority Attendance team to use legal sanctions where appropriate

Appendix A – Attendance Codes

Chalfonts Community College uses the following codes, which are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance.

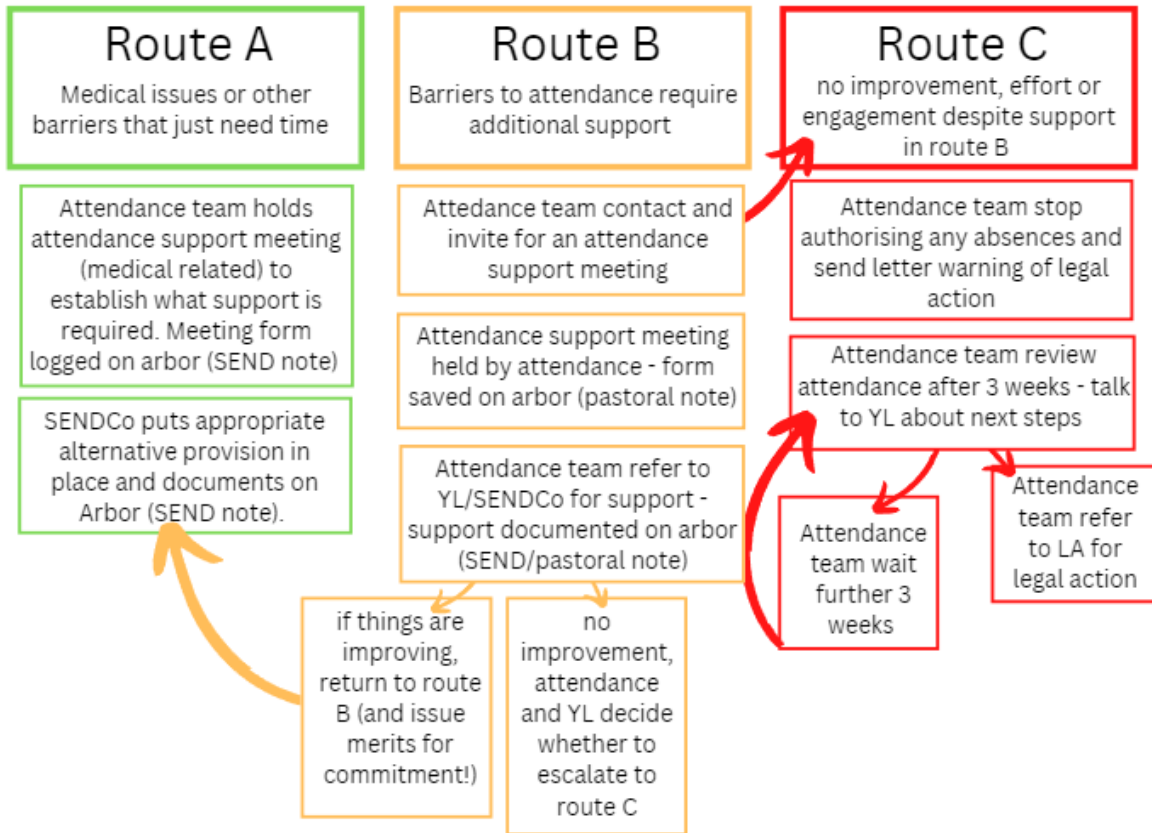
Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present during the morning roll-call period
\	Present (pm)	Student is present during the afternoon roll-call period
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late but before the end of the roll-call period
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity, approved by the school. The Attendance team will contact the provider to check the student has attended before inputting a B code.
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another session where they are also registered. The Attendance team will contact the provider regularly to check attendance.
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer or 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 trip or visit, organized or approved by the school
W	Work Experience	Student is on a work experience placement. The Attendance team will contact the provider to check the student has attended before inputting a W code.

Authorised Absences		
Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been suspended and 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 is absent due to illness
I02	Illness – covid	School has been notified that a student is 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 or Traveller absence	Student from a travelling community is travelling for occupational purposes, as agreed with school
Unauthorised Absences		

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with a code O if no reason has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with the reason given for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is a disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, student is in custody
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial closure due to half term, bank holiday, INSET etc

Appendix B – Flowchart showing school action following poor attendance

If attendance falls below 90% over a 5 weeks period



Date	Issue	Status	Comments
May 22		Updated and Formatted Added	Appendix 1 & 2
March 23		Rewritten	