

Chestnuts Primary School

"Encourage, Enable, Empower"

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Chestnuts Primary School aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality in order to enable all pupils to access the full range of educational opportunities available to them. All children and young people of compulsory age are entitled by law, regardless of ability, race, gender or culture, to a suitable education according to their needs. The best way to achieve this is attendance at school.

Rights and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Chestnuts Primary School is the responsibility of the whole school community - pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

The school expects pupils to:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time and prepared for the school day.
- Wait in the designated area with a member of staff allocated to that zone. If they arrive after the gate has been closed, then they are to buzz through to the office. If the child is in KS2 then they will walk to reception where a member of staff will buzz them in and a member of staff will escort them to their classroom. If they are in KS1, then a member of the admin team will collect them from the gate and follow the same procedure.
- Inform their teacher of any issues that may prevent them from attending school.

By law, parents/carers have the responsibility to ensure that registered children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. Parents/carers should:

- Ensure their child arrives to school on time, properly dressed and in condition to learn.
- Notify the school office of any problem that prevents pupils attending school on the first morning of absence. This needs to be before 9.05am when the registers close and the office can be notified by telephone, leaving an answerphone message or via Parent Mail.
- Contact the relevant member of staff regarding any problem (other than illness) that may keep the child away from school.
- Avoid making medical and dental appointments for their child during school hours.

A pupil's absence will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory reason is given.

Teachers and administrative staff should communicate effectively regarding pupil's attendance. Teachers should promptly take the morning and afternoon register, disclosing any known reason for a child's absence to the school office. If there is no known reason, the school office will initially send a text message then if there is no response will phone parents and carers of any children missing from school that day. In circumstances where there is a safeguarding concern a home visit will be carried out by our family worker Karen Wilkes.

Teachers and members of the Senior Leadership Team should stress that attendance and punctuality are important through way of assemblies and class discussion. The Head Teacher will present relevant certificates and prizes for good attendance on a termly basis whether they be individual or as a class.

Our Attendance Officer will monitor the schools attendance fortnightly and monitor each individual child on an individual basis. She will:-

- Send out monthly letters to pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality is a concern.
- Monitor patterns of attendance and pupils whose attendance falls below 94%.
- Inform the Head Teacher of any concerns regarding pupil's attendance.
- Deal with any Leave Of Absence Requests accordingly.
- Chase up any unexplained absences and record on the registers.
- Hold school attendance meetings with parents and carers where attendance becomes an increasing concern or where attendance hasn't risen.
- Where necessary make relevant referrals for additional support or for legal intervention.

Registration

Registration is a legal requirement and ensures an orderly start to the morning and afternoon sessions.

- Registers will be called punctually each day at 8.30-9.05am dependant on arrival time. and 1.15 pm. Teachers will complete the electronic register and Administrative Team will then identify those children who are not present and seek to find the reasons due to absence.
- If a pupil arrives after the registration period, they must wait with their parent / carer and contact the office. If the child is in KS2 then they will walk to reception where a member of staff will buzz them in and a member of staff will escort them to their classroom. If they are in KS1, then a member of the admin team will collect them from the gate and follow the same procedure. the school office staff will then sign the child/ren in on the electronic system. They will be registered as late for that session and the reason recorded.
- Pupils will be registered as **unauthorised** absent for the session unless an appropriate explanation is received.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:-

- **Genuine illness- however on the fourth incidence of illness, within a 12 month period, a medical card will be issued. This will require each subsequent incidence of illness to be validated by the medical profession (doctor, nurse, GP or medical receptionist) for this to be authorised. Any absence that is not validated will be recorded as unauthorised and could result in further action being taken for persistent absence.**
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance- **1 day per religious celebration**
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement - to be decided exclusively by the Headteacher

Absence from school will **not** be authorised for:

- Shopping
- Birthdays
- General holidays in term time

- Concerts
- Joining siblings or parents on medical appointments
- Being too tired

Only the school can authorise absences. The fact that a parent or carer has offered an explanation with a note or a phone call does not, in itself, oblige the school to accept this as a valid explanation. If, after further investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered, or when no reason has been given, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Requests for Leave of Absence

As of September 2013 Head Teachers are now no longer able to authorise any absences during term time for family holidays. If parents wish to take their children out of school during term time they need to complete a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form **four weeks ahead of proposed leave** from the school office who will refer the parent/carer to the website so this can be done electronically. This form states that absence due to holiday will be unauthorised and that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued if there is continuous absence that is greater than four days, Chestnuts Primary School will be issuing such Notices.

Should a parent or carer have any other reason to take their children out of school, they must still complete a Leave of Absence form and return to the Head Teacher/Attendance Officer who will consider each application individually. You will be informed if this absence will be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Absence, Expectations and Follow up

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

- If a pupil is absent without an explanation being received, we will text, then call on the morning of absence. We also carry out Home visits should we not hear from parents/carers. If still no contact is made, a slip will be dropped through the letterbox stating that unless contact is made by a certain time that day then a fear for welfare check will be requested from the police to ensure the safety of the child.
- If the pupil is persistently or intermittently absent or late, the Attendance Officer will write to the parents and invite them to attend a meeting at school.
 - Any child arriving late will have to remain with their parent/carer until arrangements can be made for the child to join their class
- If a pupil is persistently absent [or late] and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be managed by the school's attendance officer which will include a panel meeting at school to determine further action.
- Notes from parents will be kept on file. All telephone messages regarding absence/lateness are to be recorded on absence reports and filed for the academic year.
- The Education Act states, an offence occurs if a parent / carer fails to ensure a child's attendance at school and that the absence is not authorised by the school. The Attendance Officer may issue Parenting Contracts, Medical Cards and Action Plans in conjunction with the Head teacher.
- If these contracts, cards or action plans are not adhered to then further action will be taken. This may result in a referral to the Senior Attendance Officer at the Local Authority, resulting in Fixed Penalty Notices and in severe cases - court action.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.

- Attendance data will be monitored fortnightly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy/practice.
- High attendance awards will be presented at the end of each school term.
- Parents will be reminded regularly via newsletters, Facebook, the website, the school brochure, parent's evenings, etc of the importance of regular attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will [when appropriate] have work sent home either in the form of a paper copy or electronically such as via Google Classroom or through the 'blended learning' approach and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- The Headteacher will make an annual report to the schools governing body on attendance matters.
- The safeguarding team will liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The safeguarding team will have regular meetings with the school's Attendance Officer in order to identify how best to support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Covid 19 Addendum

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
 - schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

For the school year 2020 to 2021, a new category has been added to record instances when a pupil is 'not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

See this addendum for further information, including advice on the application of **code X**.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) (This code is not counted as an absence in the school census) This code is used to record sessions where the pupil's travel to or presence at school would conflict with:

- guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England or the Department of Health and Social Care¹² or

- any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.