



CHURCHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance & Absence Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Body
Date approved:	24 September 2024
Date of Next Review:	September 2025

Aims and Objectives

At Churcham Primary School and we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn is the foundation of securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time to avoid disruption to their learning and the learning of others
- Call the school to report their child's absence by 9.00am and leave a voicemail or as soon as possible on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and strive to attend school before or after their appointment
- Proactively engage with support offered informally or formally to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances
- Book medical appointments around the school day whenever possible

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time – the school officially starts at 9am

The governing body are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The head teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation and management of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data weekly, half termly, termly and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Ensuring parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full time education and to act as early as possible to address patterns of absence
- Initiating the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, in line with policy

The designated Attendance leads are responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

The school has a team of staff who are responsible for attendance:

Mrs Milford (Head Teacher)

Ms Birch (Administrator)

Mrs Daniels (SENDco)

They can be contacted on 01452 750467 or admin@churchqm.gloucs.sch.uk

The team is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff
- Contacting families of children with low attendance and offering support
- Planning intervention to support families
- Seeking advice where necessary

The class teacher/form tutor is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office as soon as possible after the register is completed

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance, if needed
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents
- Ensuring the attendance team have the correct attendance information and data

School processes for recording attendance and absence

We will keep an attendance register on the school MIS (SIMS) and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- 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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9 am on each school day.

The register for the morning session will be taken between 8.55 – 9.00 am by the class teacher. If a child arrives during this session, they be marked as late. If they arrive after the registration period is over, they will marked as unauthorised, unless there is an acceptable reason for the absence when they will be marked as an authorised absence. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.00 pm and will be kept open until 1.00pm.

Absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9 am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on 01452 750467 or emailing admin@churcham.gloucs.sch.uk .

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

The Attendance team and class teachers will monitor lateness. Parents will be contacting to help identify the barriers to attending school on time, support and guidance can be given from our Family Support Workers. Signposting and referrals to Early Help may also be submitted. If there are no improvements, then the school will consider the use of penalty notices, attendance agreements and code of conduct agreements.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment either by calling the school or by email.

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

The head teacher can only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted at the head teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define exceptional circumstances such as; a bereavement, the day of a wedding or funeral, no transport for one day, medical appointment or religious observance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Holiday in term times will not be authorised. If a child is absent from school and is reported as being ill and the school has reasonable doubt, evidence may be requested, particularly if the illness is added on to holiday days.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school office where parents can access the form. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include: Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)

- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)

- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (see definition above) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes – The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

Procedures following unexplained absence

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider a number of responses; emailing the parent, going to the child's home to check that the child is safe, contacting the inclusion team/ attendance team at the Local authority.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school celebrates good attendance in assemblies, school meetings with parents, displays etc.

Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels through reports
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Share the whole school attendance on the newsletter and with the children regularly in assembly
- Share attendance termly with Governors

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to Governors and staff e.g. class teachers, Family Support Worker, SENCo), to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. Attendance targets may be added to SEND My Plans and Pupil Premium Targets for pupils.

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school across the year for any reason, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school has a strategy for dealing with low attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Share attendance data with parents at least x3 times a year
- Discuss attendance, where it is a concern, with parents in parents evening
- Send letters home to inform parents of low attendance and persistent absence
- Phone parents and offer support
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school. An AIM (attendance improvement meeting) will be held.
- Signpost families to external agencies who can offer support
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct Attendance - Schoolsnet (gloucestershire.gov.uk) NB if schools use this link they will not have to update the document when it is changed on GCC's website – the new Code of Conduct will go on the website in the Autumn Term 2024.

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

- Child Protection & safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND policy
- KCSE (latest version)
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Flexi-schooling Policy
- This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

- This policy was written : September 2024
- Approved by Governors : 24 September 2024

- Signed: D.Milford
- Next Review date : September 2025

Appendix 1**Parenting contract for attendance – An agreement between the school and parents**

Parenting Contract for Attendance**Date**

Child's name:		Child's DOB:	
School/NCY:			
Parents' name(s):		Parents' DOB:	
Address(es):			
Tel:			

Senior staff member with overall responsibility:
Member of staff responsible day-to-day:
Contact number for the school to inform if the child is too unwell to attend:
Linked Inclusion Officer:

It is important that we work together to improve your child's school attendance to give them the opportunity to attain and progress. We are going to work together to ensure the above-named child improves their attendance at school with immediate effect.

Your child's current attendance is

This means they have missed sessions/days so far this year.

So far of these absences have been authorised by us.

So far of these absences have been unauthorised by us.

Your child has been late to school on occasions.

This equates to them missing minutes of their learning.

The reasons you have given for these absences have been:

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We have listened to your child and discussed with them the reasons for their absence. They have shared with us that:

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The specific targets of our plan. What we aim to do by (date):

These could be outlined in a My Plan and attached to document

To achieve these targets we will:

These could be included explicitly in a My Plan and attached to the document

Parents agree to:

School agrees to:

Child agrees to:

Reviews

This contract will be reviewed regularly.

If the contract is being adhered, to the school will ensure the child receives recognition of the improvement and will continue to monitor and support.

If the contract is not being adhered to, the school will notify the Local Authority, where next steps will be considered, including progression to attendance legal processes.

Agreeing to the contract:

Consent by parent(s):

I/we have agreed to this Parenting Contract and will:

(a) work with the school (and council) as detailed above, to improve my/our child's school attendance, and

(b) carry out what we have promised to do.

(c)

I/we also agree to information being shared with other professionals and agencies as required to help us.

I/we understand that if my child has any further unauthorised absences from school, a Penalty Notice or prosecution may follow without further warning. This agreement may be given as part of the evidence.

Signed (Parent/s):

.....
.....

Signed by the Child (age appropriate)

.....

Signed (on behalf of the school/governing body/local authority)

.....
.....

Head Teacher: D.Milford

Date:

Appendix 2

Request for Leave during Term Time TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT(S)/CARER(S)

A Request for Leave during Term Time form must be completed and returned to the School Office if you intend to take your child(ren) out of school during term time. This should be completed prior to any absence.

Pupil	
Name	
Date of Birth	
Year	
Class/Form	
First date of absence	
Last date of absence	

Parents – Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.			
Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email		Email	
Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No	Accompanying child during the leave of absence	Yes / No
Signature		Signature	
Printed name		Printed name	
Date		Date	

To establish if your reasons for the above absence are for exceptional circumstances, please give as much detail as possible (including your destination).

The decision will be based on the information you provide on this form (please continue with additional information on a separate sheet if required)

Our records will reflect that you will still proceed with this absence on an unauthorised basis, however, should you decide not to take your child out of school at this time, please let us know as soon as possible.

Reasons for request:

Information for parents/carers

- *'Improving attendance is everyone's business'*, and it is important that we, as your child's school, work together in partnership with you, your family, your child, and the wider community.
- Any holiday-related absence taken that includes 10 sessions in 10 weeks, may result in a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty amount is increasing to £160 from September 2024 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days for the first offence). If a parent receives a second penalty notice within a rolling three-year period (following 1st September 2024) the fine is £160 and there is no option to pay the fine at a reduced rate.

- Parents with parental responsibility, and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, may be fined, and this applies to each child who is absent.
- If a Penalty Notice is not paid within the time limits set out in the letter to the parent, the Local Authority may proceed the case to court.
- Nationally, Headteachers are: not permitted to approve term-time holidays except in genuinely exceptional circumstances, and are to consider each application for a leave of absence individually before making our decision.
- The law clearly expects Headteachers to enforce these penalties strictly.
- Parents/carers **do not** have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time. Any requests are considered on an individual basis following guidelines issued by the DfE and LA.
- Holiday absences will not be authorised if they are not considered to meet exceptional circumstances.
- If a pupil goes on holiday without permission, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. Absence will also be unauthorised if a child does not return to school on the agreed date. Unauthorised absence could result in referral to the LA to begin legal proceedings.

Appendix 3

Request for Leave during Term Time

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEADTEACHER

Pupil Name	
Date of Birth	
First date of absence	
Last date of absence	

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Leave of absence authorised for the dates specified above.</p> <p>Please ensure your child returns to school promptly following the absence, as failure to do so may result in their removal from the school roll.</p>	Signature of headteacher:	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Leave of absence unauthorised for the dates specified above.</p> <p>Should your child be absent on the dates specified above, these dates will be marked as unauthorised.</p> <p>This absence may result in a penalty notice being issued by the LA on behalf of the school.</p>	Signature of headteacher:	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	Signature of headteacher:	Date:

Parents – Parent means: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who has care of a child or young person i.e., lives with and looks after the child.

Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email		Email	
Confirmation letter sent to parent	Yes / No	Confirmation letter sent to parent	Yes / No
Date sent		Date sent	

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