

CHULMLEIGH ACADEMY TRUST

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Last reviewed: September 2024

Next review due by: September 2025

Key Staff

Mr M Johnson	Executive Headteacher
Miss R Woods	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Mrs S Jordan	Attendance Officer
Mrs C Harrington	Early Help Lead
Mrs E Philpott	Head of Keystage 3
Mrs R Jordan	Head of keystage 4
Miss L Goldsmith	Deputy Head of Keystage 4

Contents:

1. Aims of this policy
2. Key purpose and principles of the policy
3. Good attendance is important because....
4. Legislation and Guidance
5. Roles and Responsibilities
6. Registration, Lateness and Punctuality
7. Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation
8. How the school will follow up on absence
9. Strategies for promoting attendance

1. Aim of this policy

- To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at Chulmleigh Academy Trust (“the School”).
- To maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96%
- To maintain parents’/carers’ and pupils’ awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- To maintain good timekeeping and punctuality

2. Key Purpose and Principles of the Policy

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the School to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Good attendance will be rewarded
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this, and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. The School will work with pupils, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- We will continue to aim for every pupil having access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- We shall act early to address patterns of absence

3. The importance of good attendance

Good attendance is important because:

- There is a direct link between underachievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders settle into school more easily

4. 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.

5. Roles and responsibilities:

5.1 The School

The School will:

- develop and maintain a whole School culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying systems of support and sanctions where appropriate
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the School's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- share information and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all pupils can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, working together to improve school attendance.
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education
- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system

- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the School to a designated senior leader: Miss R Woods (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education (Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

5.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the School on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment every day
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the School informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- inform the School in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk).

5.3 Pupils

We expect pupils to:

- attend the School regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the School late

5.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL") at the School is Miss R Woods. The DSL will be responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at the School and will:

- Leading attendance across the school
- offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- oversee attendance and absence data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and pupils

Miss R Woods can be contacted via rwoods@chulmleigh.devon.sch.uk

5.5 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

5.6 Form Tutors / Classroom Teachers

Form tutors/classroom teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily, and for every lesson taught thereafter on Class Charts

5.7 Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Taking calls and emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Generating, monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer to tackle persistent absence

5.8 Keystage Team

The Head of Keystage 4 is Mrs R Jordan.

The Head of Keystage 3 is Mrs E Philpott.

The Deputy Head of Keystage 3 is Miss L Goldsmith.

Keystage Team leaders are responsible for:

- Working with the Attendance Officer and DSL to tackle persistent absence
- To share any calls or emails received from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis with the Attendance Officer
- To record any remarkable concerns relating to attendance on CPOMS
- To monitor and analyse attendance data during fortnightly Head of Keystage meetings
- To support families through the process of Early Help assessment and any onwards referrals as necessary
- To promote the importance of regular attendance
- To praise pupils where attendance is high or has improved
- To chair attendance support meetings for families of pupils with attendance concerns

5.9 The Governing Board:

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

6. Registration, Lateness and Punctuality

- It is important for pupils to arrive punctually to school. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class.
- When pupils have morning registration, they must line up outside of the classroom door of their first lesson at 8:35am, to be ready for registration at 8:40am.
- Registers will be taken within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.
- Pupils arriving after registers have closed, 10 minutes into the lesson, will be required to sign in with the Attendance Officer in the Attendance Office. The pupil must provide a reason for the lateness. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- Pupils are registered at the start of every lesson and at the start of Tutor Time.
- A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- Pupils who arrive more than 15 minutes late will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with the DfE guidance. This is effectively an absence.
- Punctuality will be monitored by the Form Tutor and Keystage Team. Frequent lateness will be challenged by the Form Tutor, who will work with the pupil and family to resolve causes of lateness. The Keystage Team will become involved in cases of persistent lateness or if there are Safeguarding concerns. This may then be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in school.
- Pupils are expected to arrive to lessons promptly. Pupils who arrive late may also be marked with an 'L'. If pupil is more than 5 minutes late then the number of minutes should be recorded. All lateness will be challenged by the subject teacher. If this becomes frequent or persistent, then this should be referred to the Head of Department and Head of Keystage.

- The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education's guidance on attendance - Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Where a pupil attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and engage parents where necessary.
- Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with Behaviour Policy.

7. Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

7.1 Authorised Absence

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Close family bereavement

7.2 Unauthorised Absence

There are times when pupils are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Some examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Parent's illness
- Caring for a younger sibling
- Waiting for a delivery
- Taking or collecting a relative to/from the airport
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- To celebrate a birthday
- Term time holiday/Cheap flights

Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory, absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised, and you may be liable for a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action.

7.3 Reporting an unplanned absence from the School

Procedures for parents/carers in the case of absence of their child It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible. The school has a dedicated absence reporting line so that parents/carers can inform the school when their child is not able to attend school. Parents/carers are requested to call or email as early as possible on each day that the

pupil does not attend, (preferably by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible) not just on the first day. If parents/carers have done this on each day, there is no need for them to write a note when their child returns to school.

Please ring 01769 580 215 or email attendance@chulmleigh.devon.sch.uk

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers 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.

Authorised absence - absence will only be authorised where the School has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the School can authorise absence.

7.4 Appointments

Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.

Where an appointment must take place during school time, the school will only authorise half a day for medical appointments. The pupil must attend the school for as much of the day as possible and provide as much prior notice as possible to the Attendance Officer of the appointment. The pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

For the time absent from the School to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter must be provided.

7.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

Parents and carers should not take pupils out of education for holidays or other leave of absence during term time. The School will not authorise term time holidays.

To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Headteacher and Attendance Officer. Wherever possible, at least 3 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.

Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Attendance Officer will liaise with the Headteacher who will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:

- the response to the request will be confirmed in writing
- the response is solely at the Headteacher's Officer's discretion and is final.

Where permission is granted, the Attendance Officer will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the School, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

8 How the school will follow up on unexplained absence

8.1 Truancy

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, or if the reason given for absence is not satisfactory, the school may consider a home visit, involving a member of the school's safeguarding team, the Attendance Improvement Officer or the Police. Any such action will be recorded on CPOMS for safeguarding purposes.
- For absences over a 5-day period, the school will require supporting medical evidence.

8.2 Internal Truancy

The school has a system in place if a pupil does not attend a lesson, but they were in the previous lesson. When the teacher registers the lesson, he/she will contact the relevant staff who will then begin a search for that pupil. If a pupil is not found following a search, then the parents and possibly the police will be informed.

8.3 Child Missing Education (CME)

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, there is no reasonable explanation for the absence and the pupil has not been seen by a professional, this constitutes a safeguarding concern.

The government has placed a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to establish (as far as it is possible) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education, that is, children missing education (CME).

Children not receiving a suitable education are at increased risk of a range of negative outcomes that could have long-term damaging consequences for their life chances.

In Devon, we are committed to ensuring that all pupils who go missing from schools in the Local Authority, or who disappear from other counties and may have arrived in Devon, are speedily located.

- The Attendance Officer will complete the CME Referral Form 1 (CME1) and share this with the CME Team.
- If appropriate, a MASH enquiry may also be raised by the DSL.

9 Strategies for promoting attendance

9.1 Praise and Reward

- Excellent attendance will be recognised through the award of 100% attendance badges annually
- Award of House Colours ties will be dependent upon good attendance
- Participation in sports fixtures will be dependent upon good attendance
- Publication of house group attendance data will be displayed on the rolling noticeboard
- Targeted assemblies will focus upon the importance of positive attendance

9.2 Consistent messaging and communication

- Parents/carers are reminded of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our letters, the school prospectus, open evenings, and reports. Termly reports to parents report of pupil's attendance percentages.
- Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:
 - a pattern of unauthorised absence
 - a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
 - persistent truancy or lateness

We will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

Chulmleigh Academy Trust has a duty to keep parents informed if at any time we start to become concerned of absences. The procedure we follow is below, but you must not wait for a letter from us if you wish to talk about any concerns you have about your Childs attendance, it is important that any attendance concerns are addressed at an early stage to prevent patterns of absence becoming habitual.

- Phone to explore if there are any concerns around attendance
- Letter 1 + invitation to explore Early Help
- Letter 2 + invitation to explore Early Help
- Letter 3+ invitation to explore Early Help
- Invitation to an attendance support meeting
- Referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer

9.3 Engaging with external agencies to support good attendance

Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental cooperation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance support plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place a parenting contract.

Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the School will signpost and support access to any additional services. This may include but is not limited to:

- Early Help
- Child and adolescent mental health service
- Social Care

- 0-25 team
- Public Health Nursing
- Any other agencies that are deemed appropriate
- Home visits If the level of absences continues to cause concern, the school will consider taking legal action with the support of the Attendance Improvement Officer.

9.4 Application of the Behaviour Policy

Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time can be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Alongside a supportive conversation exploring the reasons for truancy, it is usual for pupils who truant to be internally excluded. Pupils may also be placed onto a late report.

9.5 Penalty Notices

Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the School and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine imposed on parents.

When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to:

- section 6 of the Department for Education's guidance, Working together to improve school attendance: Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.