

Chellaston Junior School

Attendance policy

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1. Aims

At CJS, we believe there is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement. We aim for every child to “Step to Success” and achieve their very best and attendance is a vital ingredient to help all pupils fulfill their potential. The school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting excellent attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Supporting parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attendance at school
- Setting a target of 97.5% attendance for all pupils at CJS
- Working in partnership with pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Service

2. 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils 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 the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school between 8.45am and 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55 and will be kept open until 9.10. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.20pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked as Late. If a child arrives after 9.30am, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Known/long term medical conditions

If a child has or develops a condition which is likely to impact upon their attendance at school, parents should contact the Headteacher. The Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the relevant staff and parents, and other agencies where appropriate, to ensure that child is supported to manage their condition at school. Parents will be required to provide appropriate medical evidence. This approach will ensure that everyone is working together to ensure absences are minimised. In some cases, if a condition is serious or long term, a care plan may be produced which formalises the agreed approach between all parties.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of an unplanned absence and explain the reason for the absence by 9.30 or as soon as practically possible (see also Section 6).

Parents are asked to contact the school office and leave a message as directed, or speak directly to a member of staff.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, or the attendance of the child is so low (below 90%) that the EWO advises that medical evidence is required.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, or the attendance is very low (below 90%), the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

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

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

We encourage parents 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 and return to school as soon as possible after the appointment.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence.

Advance notice is required for authorising medical or dental absences. Parents are asked to contact the school via telephone, email, letter or the home-school diary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in Section 4.

3.4 Collecting Pupils during the school day

If a pupil needs to be collected during the school day by a parent/carer, they need to be signed out of school at the school office, recording the time of collection and the reason for absence.

3.4 Lateness

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent..

Any child arriving late to school, should enter via the main reception, where staff will record the attendance before the pupils goes to the classroom.

The school gates are closed at 8.55, after which time pupils are required to enter school via the main reception.

Concerns regarding the punctuality of pupils will be communicated to parents as necessary, so that we can discuss a way forward to help the punctuality to improve so the child does not miss out on important learning at school.

3.5 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.

Parents are expected to inform the school regarding the reason for absence by 9.30am on the day of absence.

The school will contact all parents who have not provided a reason for absence, by 10.00am..

If the school have still not received a reason for absence by 11.00am, the matter will be referred to the attendance officer to liaise with Learning Mentor/SLT/Headteacher as appropriate, so that direct contact with parents can be made.

If the school have still not received contact with parents regarding a reason for absence by 1.00pm, then the school may contact the EWO and discuss whether a home visit is required.

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school report annual attendance to parents as part of the end of year reports in July each year. This will be reported as percentage for the whole year to date.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The school encourages all parents/carers to limit any absence during term-time to the absolute minimum. Any absence will disrupt a child's routine, affect their learning and have a negative impact on progress at school.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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
- Traveller pupils 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 but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Certain educational activities that involve pupils developing their talents in curriculum areas such as music, drama and sport.

If a parent is requesting leave of absence during term time, they are expected to put the request in writing to the Headteacher, at least 4 weeks in advance, if possible. 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 Headteacher's discretion.

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless the request is considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'. "Exceptional circumstances" do not include having access to cheaper holidays or cheap travel arrangements. "Exceptional circumstances" include a short period of time for family bereavements, funerals and celebrations such as family weddings. It is unlikely that absences longer than 5 days will be authorised.

If a request for term-time absence is refused, the Headteacher will write to the parent to explain the decision and urge the parent/carer to re-consider the absence. The letter will include information that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be imposed if the absence occurs.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

A Fixed Penalty equates to £60 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent per child, if paid within 28 days.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the advice from Derby City Council. This may take into account:

- 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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, Derby City Council will decide whether to prosecute the parent, which may lead to Court proceedings.

5. Missing Children

The school will follow the Runaway, Missing from Home or Care Policy guidelines from Derby City and Derbyshire Local Authority. This follows the guidance set out in “Children Missing from Education” DFE 2016. The Attendance policy links to the school policy on Runaway, Missing from Home or Care Policy.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school aims to promote, celebrate and reward good attendance by:

- Celebrating high attendance in each year group, each week in assembly.
- Promoting high attendance each week in assembly and reminding pupils “The more we attend school, the more we achieve”.
- Rewarding pupils with 100% attendance at the end of the summer term.
- Rewarding the class with the highest attendance in each year group at the end of each half term
- Working in partnership with parents, communicating regularly to encourage high attendance.
- Raising awareness with parents via school newsletters
- Providing breakfast club at school if appropriate and other strategies to promote attendance

7. Attendance monitoring

The administration team and the attendance officer monitor pupil absence on a daily basis..

Parents are expected to contact the school in the morning or leave a message with the school if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to notify the school regarding the length of absence or, if needed, each day a child is absent.

If a pupil’s absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If, after contacting parents, a pupil’s absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer, school nurse or other appropriate support.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil’s individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. The school will monitor the attendance of all pupils considered a persistent absentee and keep a record of their attendance.

If there are serious concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil, whether on a specific day or over a period of time, the school may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO may do a home visit and discuss a plan of action to improve attendance. If serious concerns remain, the EWO may follow the relevant legal procedures with reference to the documents outlined in Section 2.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level in line with the DfE school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

The school monitors attendance of all pupils each half term and meets with the Education Welfare Officer to clarify actions needed. Attendance of pupils is collected to track the attendance of different groups, including gender, SEND, Pupil premium and Ethnicity. Attendance is tracked each half term and a record kept for senior staff to analyse and implement any actions with pupils and parents as necessary.

Parents may be contacted by telephone or letter regarding concerns about attendance. The school expects parents to work together in partnership and meet with relevant staff at school to agree a way forward to improve attendance.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Governing Board

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

8.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher 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 Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

8.3 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office, both for morning and afternoon sessions

8.4 Administration Staff

Administration staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence, implement the First Day Contact system record attendance on the school system and inform the relevant staff.

The Administration staff are aware of the pupils who need very regular monitoring of attendance and alert the relevant staff to any concerns as they arise.

8.5 The Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to Learning Mentor/SLT and agrees the actions needed
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Provides the data on attendance to report to Governors each term

8.6 The Learning Mentor

- Works in partnership with the Administration Team, the Attendance Officer and SLT
- Contacts parents to discuss concerns, offer support and agree a way forward
- Meets with the Attendance Officer, SLT and EWO each half term to monitor attendance

8.7 SLT

A member of the SLT:

- Is responsible for the review and implementation of the Attendance Policy
- Meets with the EWO each half term to monitor attendance
- Monitors attendance alongside the Attendance Officer and agrees a plan of action
- Liaises with the Learning Mentor to follow up any communication with parents
- Communicates with SLT and all teaching staff about attendance concerns and actions to implement.
- Reports to the Governors each term as part of the Headteacher's Report

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by SLT and Governors

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to the school Safeguarding Policy (October 2018) and Runaway Missing from Home or Care Policy (February 2016).

