



Attendance policy

Cheney School

Approved by: Governing Body

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good 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

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

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:

- 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 DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

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

Our Chair of Governors Mr R Stamper, is the governor with responsibility for attendance

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- 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

3.4 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on the school's management information system. When this is not possible a paper register is taken and submitted to the attendance office. Roll call is taken during tutor time and period 4.

3.5 School staff

The School Attendance Team is expected to take calls from parents about absence, monitor the reporting absence form and record reasons for absence on the school system.

3.6 Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, details of how to report absence are available on the absence and [attendance page of our school website](#).
- Or you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Manager and/or Pastoral Leaders, Heads of Student Progress, and/or member of the Senior Leadership Team if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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 or flexi-schooling
- 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 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:30am and will be kept open until 10:40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:30pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:25am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; details of how to report absence are available on the [absence and attendance page of our school website](#).

Or you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

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. Excessive illness without medical evidence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

4.3 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.

If your child is going to be absent for an appointment you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible in advance of the absence; details of how to report absence are available on the [absence and attendance page of our school website](#).
- Or you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

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 pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of the year team and/or Attendance Officer and/or Senior Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents/carers to ascertain the reason. The most appropriate adult will make contact with parents/carers most usually by telephone or email. In most instances contact will be made by the one of the following:
 - o the attendance team,
 - o the year team
 - o the SEND team
 - o a senior leader.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Cheney School reports to parents on their child's attendance record in line with the academic reporting cycle. Further details on your child's attendance can be requested via the year team or accessed through the parental app supported by the management information system.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances where a pupil's absence from school is necessary to support their health, mental health or well being, or where complex family circumstances require a temporary absence from school in order to support the overall development of the student .

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail), this might include an extended absence for complex medical issues which is supported and evidenced by a medical professional.
- 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
- In 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time absence for families to travel to support extended family where it is deemed that there is no other reasonable option but to take the pupil out of school.
- Study leave
- Flexi-schooling requests – Cheney School engages in flexi-schooling arrangements. If flexi-schooling is the most appropriate form of education for a student this will be agreed with the headteacher.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the harm done to your child's education. Each academic year Cheney School issues a warning letter informing families that they may be issued a penalty notice or prosecuted should they take holiday in term time. **Oxfordshire County Council will issue a penalty notice and fine for a first offence, subsequent offences are prosecuted and carry a criminal conviction.**

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school to go on holiday.

- All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
- Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a student's attendance is less than 95%.
- Exceptional leave will always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
- Exceptional leave will always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
- Reasons for Exceptional Leave will be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason, including Authorised absences. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case where we believe absence is likely to develop into persistent absence or that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with support where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are monitored and reasons for absence are explored. When we have concerns we will contact you to explore how we can improve attendance.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will consult with the County Attendance Team and where appropriate seek your consent to work with external agencies to complete an Early Help Assessment with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

When necessary we will follow the legal sanctions outlined in 5.3.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Please note, each academic year Cheney School issues a warning letter informing families that they may be issued a penalty notice or prosecuted should they take holiday in term time. Oxfordshire County Council will issue a penalty notice and fine for a first offence, subsequent offences are prosecuted and carry a criminal conviction.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote good attendance to school by recognising and rewarding good attendance. This is done through praising pupils informally, awarding house points and giving prizes for the best attendance.

In addition, form tutors and year teams monitor and discuss attendance and liaise with the attendance teams. Where pupil's attendance becomes a concern, this is reviewed and where necessary action is taken, as outlined in this policy.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily and weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If your child is to be absent, please report for each separate day of absence by contacting us each day.

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. If we have not been able to establish any contact we will conduct a home visit to sight the child. If this has not been possible we will alert the local authority and where necessary the police.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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.

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.

Cheney School collects and stores attendance data on its management information system. Attendance data is used internally and is shared with the Local Authority (especially the Attendance Team, The Locality and Community Support Service (**LCSS**), the River Learning Trust and the Department for Education.

Attendance data is used for to:

- track the attendance of individual pupils
- identify whether individual children or siblings need support to improve their attendance
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support
- help assess safeguarding concerns

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years by the senior leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |