



# Churchdown School Academy

ACHIEVING SUCCESS FOR ALL

Date policy reviewed:	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2022
Date due to be reviewed:	1 <sup>st</sup> September 2023
Person responsible:	Ms J Hilton

## Attendance Policy

Important Contacts	
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At Churchdown School Academy (the “school”) the education we provide is guided by values of integrity, resilience, respect, ambition, and friendship. These values are particularly important to us as we develop the students into lifelong learners and prepare them for a life beyond school.

We are an 11-18 non-selective academy where everyone, staff and students, strive to be the best they can be. Our aim is simple: ‘to achieve success for all’. We are proud of our warm and welcoming community in which everyone participates to make a positive contribution. The language spoken is about aiming to be the best we can be. Teachers are unrelenting and ensure there are no limits or barriers to student achievement. Students enjoy their school lives and are proud of the school.

Good and punctual attendance is central to our ambition for every student to be the best they can be. At the school we aim for excellent attendance from all students which means that students should aim to attend every day that the school is open. This includes the occasional days where a student may have a minor illness unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence. In such circumstances, parents are encouraged to make us aware of their child’s illness and to send them into school, where they will be supported and encouraged to attend as many lessons as possible. At the school we define regular attendance as being 98% or above.

### **Legal Requirements**

Parents or guardians of students of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education by attendance at school or otherwise under the provisions 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
- Any person who has care of a child, ie lives with and looks after the child

The local authority and the school will decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular student when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child.

### **Strategic Lead for Attendance**

Ms Hilton (Deputy Head) is the strategic lead for all matters related to attendance at Churchdown School Academy. However, Heads of Year (HoY) have oversight of the attendance for the students in their year group.

In the role of strategic lead for attendance, Ms Hilton works with a range of pastoral staff including Heads of Year, the SENCo, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Educational Welfare Officer to support students and parents in securing good and punctual attendance. Wider support services such as Early Help are accessed as necessary to ensure that every attempt has been made to remove any barriers to attendance. This may include formalising any support in conjunction with the Local Authority.

## **Registration**

Students are expected to be on the school site by 8:35am. Registration takes place at 8:40am every morning and all students are expected to be present in their tutor room at this time. Morning registration closes at 8:55am after which point the student will be marked as late (L). If the student arrives after 9:30am they will be marked with a U code.

Students are registered for the afternoon session at 1:25pm which is the start of lesson 5. Registration for the afternoon session closes at 1:45pm. In addition to this, students are registered at the start of every lesson. Attendance will be marked in line with Government regulations where students arrive late to registration. The details for this can be found in Appendix A.

The Headteacher may request that a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued to parents who are persistently late after the close of registration in line with Local Authority guidelines. Please note that the Fixed Penalty Notice is issued to each parent for each child. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days which increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court. Parents who are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice for their child being persistently late after the registers have closed will be issued a warning letter in the first instance. Further unauthorised absence or lateness can lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued in line with the Local Authority guidelines.

## **Request for Authorised Absence**

Students are not permitted to take holidays in term time. The correlation between good attendance and good exam results is very strong and missing lessons will lead to significant underperformance in examinations. In exceptional circumstances, parents are required to complete a 'Request for Authorised Absence' form and send it to the Headteacher, explaining why exceptional circumstances should be granted. This request must be received in advance of the period of absence, retrospective authorisation cannot be given. The form is available on the school's website in the Parents' section. It can also be found at Appendix B.

Only in exceptional circumstances will an absence be sanctioned, and this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. If an unauthorised holiday is taken in term time the Headteacher may instruct the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (as set out above). Details of penalty notices can be found at Appendix C.

## **Absence for Extra Curricular Activities**

The school encourages students' participation in extracurricular activities. Students will sometimes need time away from school to participate in their chosen field. Examples might include:

- Playing sport for a national or county side
- Performing in a drama production or TV/film role
- Instrumental performance for an orchestra
- A dance exam or a music exam

**Parents must always complete a Request for Authorised Absence form to request any time off from school for special events.** In all situations, professional discretion will be taken and close liaison with the student and parents will inform the school's decision. Where an absence is beneficial to the student's success in their chosen field and unlikely to significantly harm the student's education, then special permission will be granted to have time away from school. Any absences that are requested for extra-curricular activities will be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.

## **Unexpected Absences**

In circumstances where a student is unexpectedly absent, for example they are too ill to come to school, parents should:

- Phone the school before 9:00am on the first day of the illness and leave a message with the school's Attendance Officer to explain the reason for this absence. The absence line is open 24 hours a day
- Parents should also send an email to [attendance@churchdownschool.com](mailto:attendance@churchdownschool.com) explaining the reason for this absence.

This procedure should be repeated on each subsequent day that the illness continues. Parents should also provide an explanatory note to be given to the students' tutor upon their return to school.

Parents should encourage their children to come into school later in the day if they are well enough to do so.

If a student's attendance rate falls below 90%, the school may request further medical evidence, for example an appointment card or confirmation of a visit to the GP whenever further illness occurs. The school may also request a visit from the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to the parents' house when attendance drops below 90%.

## **Unexplained Absences**

When a child is absent from school and we have not received any communication from a parent, our Attendance Officer will attempt to contact the parent by phone before 10:30am on the day of absence. It is essential that parents provide us with at least two emergency contact numbers to facilitate this and that they inform school of any changes to their contact details.

The Head of Year may also call the parents later in the day to gain further understanding of the reason for the absence and to ascertain if any support needs to be put in place before the child returns to school. The absence will be marked as unauthorised until we are able to make contact with the parents. We will aim to complete a home visit on the third day of unauthorised absence due to lack of parental contact. All schools have a duty to inform the Local Authority of any students who have irregular attendance or have 10 or more consecutive school days absence without permission.

## **Promoting Good Attendance**

Rewards are regularly used to encourage good attendance. The following are examples of rewards used by the school:

- Good attendance is celebrated in weekly year group assemblies
- Tutor groups are rewarded collectively for the highest attendance each week
- End of term assemblies to celebrate the tutor group with the highest attendance
- Students with 100% attendance for the term are entered into a prize draw in week three of every term
- Individual students with over 98% attendance for the term are entered into a prize draw at the end of every term
- House assemblies regularly display names of students with 100% attendance and celebrate their success

The importance of good attendance is communicated regularly to students and is promoted through newsletters and parentmails. In addition to this, tutors and Heads of Year regularly speak with parents where there are concerns. Parents are also invited in to meet with Heads of Year or our EWO if these concerns continue.

### **Improving Attendance**

The attendance data which is produced daily by the Attendance Officer is shared with appropriate staff. This is used by tutors to call parents of students who are on their first day of absence and by Heads of Year to contact parents when an absence is unexplained.

Weekly attendance data is shared by our Attendance Officer and our EWO which enables us to identify trends within year groups and to identify students who are at risk of becoming persistently absent (PA) or severely absent (SA).

In addition to this, our Data Manager analyses the attendance data both bi-weekly and termly to enable us to react to trends within year groups and throughout the academic year. Students who are at risk of becoming PA or SA will be contacted by the Head of Year or our EWO in order to ensure that there is a support plan in place to improve their attendance. This may include working formally with the Local Authority.

Parents will initially be contacted by their child's tutor following an absence. This is primarily a welfare check and is intended to ensure a positive return to school as soon as possible. If there are continued or sustained absences, the parent will be contacted by the Head of Year or the Assistant Head of Year to establish if further support is needed within school or from external agencies. In some instances, parents may be contacted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL) at this point.

If the student's attendance falls below 95%, parents may be invited in to meet with the Head of Year. If the student's attendance continues to fall to below 90%, parents may be invited in for a meeting with the EWO to formalise an Attendance Improvement Plan (AIM).

During the AIM meeting, targets will be set for the student, the parents and the school. This plan will be reviewed every 2 weeks. If attendance continues to be below 90%, the school will submit the plan to the Local Authority and request that legal action is taken. This could result in a fine being issued by the Local Authority.

### **Attendance Improvement Team**

Securing good attendance requires us to work as a team together with the parents. The structures and responsibilities below outline the support that is in place at Churchdown School to secure good attendance for all students.

### **Attendance Officer**

A full-time Attendance Officer works in the school. The role involves:

- Ensuring the registers are taken every am and pm registration
- Accepting phones calls from parents when students are absent
- Processing emails from parents regarding student absence
- Phoning parents between 9:00am and 10:30am on the first day of absence if no reason has been received (all parents should phone in before 9:00am whenever their child is absent)
- This information will be disseminated to the Headteacher, Deputy Head, SENCo, HoYs

## **Heads of Year**

HoY have oversight of the attendance for the students in their year group, and the responsibility to:

- Promote and encourage outstanding attendance within their year group
- Review the daily list issued by the attendance officer
- Contact parents / carers if the attendance officer has not been able to make contact
- Meet with EWO bi-weekly to review attendance and plan interventions
- Identify any concerns that need to be raised with the EWO / Deputy Head
- Meet with students and parents who have below 90% attendance and arrange for appropriate support / consequences to be put in place
- Ensure that good attendance is celebrated in assemblies
- Ensure that tutor groups with 100% attendance are rewarded
- Ensures that students with 98% attendance or above are entered into a prize draw in the termly celebration assembly

## **Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)**

The school employs a part time EWO. The role of the EWO is:

- To review attendance data weekly and share with Heads of Year / Deputy Head
- To meet with the Deputy Head weekly to review attendance and to plan interventions
- To meet with Heads of Year bi-weekly to review attendance and to plan interventions
- To meet with students and parents where attendance is below 90%
- To initiate attendance plans for students with less than 90% attendance
- To carry out home visits where welfare concerns are identified, together with the school's Deputy DSL
- To record and collate evidence of meetings and visits
- To raise any safeguarding concerns around Children Missing Education with the Deputy Head (see Appendix D)
- To liaise with external agencies and other educational provisions as appropriate
- To ensure that registers are coded correctly
- To ensure that the school is kept up to date with any changes in legislation regarding attendance
- To liaise with the Local Authority regarding the implementation of Penalty Notices and legal proceedings

## **Parents**

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their children arrive in school on time every day and that they are equipped to learn.

## **Students**

It is the responsibility of the students to ensure that they arrive in school on time every day and are equipped to learn.

**Linked Policies**

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

**Appendices**

Appendix A: Government regulations for marking attendance

Appendix B: Request for authorised absence in exceptional circumstances

Appendix C: Details of penalty notices

Appendix D: Children Missing in Education (CME)

## **Appendix A: School Absence and Attendance Codes**

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

### **Present at school**

Students must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a student were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

- Registration code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm  
Present in school during registration
- Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

A student arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

### **Absence codes when students are not present in school are as follows:**

Code C: leave of absence authorised by the school

Code E: excluded but no alternative provision made

Code H: holiday authorised by the school

Code I: illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Code M: medical or dental appointments

Code R: religious observance

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

### **Unauthorised absence from school**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the Headteacher

Code N: reason for absence not yet provided

Code O: absent from school without authorisation

Code U: arrived in school after registration closed

### **Other codes used when students are not present:**

Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

Code Y: unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Code Z: student not on admission register

Code #: planned whole or partial school closure



## Appendix B: APPLICATION FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL IN 'EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES'

If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the request for absence is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**.

In the case of unauthorised leave of absence, the Headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to **each** parent for **each** child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days and increases to £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid, this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

### REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

I would like the school to consider my application for the exceptional circumstances outlined on the reverse. **(Please give reasons for your request using the box on the reverse of this letter)**

#### CONTACT DETAILS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

	Parent / Carer Number 1	Parent / Carer Number 2
Name		
Phone Number		
Email Address		

#### DETAILS OF CHILDREN

	Name	Tutor Group
First Child		
Second Child		
Third Child		

#### FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

AUTHORISED		NOT AUTHORISED		CURRENT ATTENDANCE (%)	
SIGNED				DATE	



Having attended the Parents' Information Evening in Term 1, I am aware of the school's views on taking children out of school during term time. I understand that taking my child/children out of school may have a detrimental effect on their education. **I also understand that the school's Attendance Policy states that absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and that the Local Authority may issue a fine in some circumstances.**

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised but the holiday is taken, the Headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school.

I would like the school to consider my application for the following exceptional circumstances outlined below.

FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE		LAST DAY OF ABSENCE		NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS REQUESTED	

Please ensure that you allow sufficient time for your request to be processed (we suggest three weeks). School will reply to your request by email.

**Ms J Hilton**  
Deputy Headteacher

## Appendix C: Details of penalty notices

Penalty notices may be issued by the Local Authority under any of the following circumstances:

**An excluded student is found in a public place:** An excluded student found in a public place, without a justifiable reason for being there, during school hours on a school day during the first five days of a fixed exclusion period or a permanent exclusion.

**Unauthorised holiday during term time (Code G):** A minimum of 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence from school during term-time, in order to take a holiday, within the immediately preceding 10-week period (recorded as Code G on the school attendance register). Each parent may be issued with a separate penalty notice for each child taken out of school.

**Persistent lateness after registers have closed (Code U):** Persistent lateness of a student arriving at school after the registers have closed and where there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised lateness within the immediately preceding 10-week period (recorded as Code U on the school attendance register).

Prior to requesting a penalty notice in respect of unauthorised absence for lateness, the school should issue a letter to the parent(s) warning that if there is further unauthorised absence within the next 15 school days then a penalty notice will be requested for each parent.

The warning letter must be sent by first class post and formally addressed to each parent and may need to be exhibited in court. The warning letter should be considered as served, and the 15-day period as starting, two days after being posted to allow for delivery time. If there is no further unauthorised absence within the 15-school day period no penalty notice will be issued but if there are a further 10 sessions of absence within the next 12 month period following the warning letter, a penalty notice may be requested.

The penalty notice must be paid within 28 days of deemed service. The amount that will need to be paid will depend on when the payment is made. If full payment is made within the first 21 days, the fine will be £60. If, however, payment is made between the 22nd and 28th day, the fine will be £120.

## **Appendix D: Children Missing in Education (CME)**

Children Missing in Education refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity, eg school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as 4 weeks)'.

CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown), and are usually children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either:

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- has left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.

We recognise that a child going missing from education, particularly persistently, can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and/or criminal exploitation. It is therefore important that the school's response to such absence supports identifying such abuse and helps prevent children going missing in the future.

Where reasonably possible, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each student to provide the school with additional options to make contact with a responsible adult particularly when a child missing from education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Our procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education are based on the Local Authority and South West Region's Safeguarding Children procedures. We will make reasonable attempts to investigate the whereabouts of the child, including phone calls and home visits. If we are unable to make contact with parents, we will notify the Local Authority of our concerns by reporting the children missing education to the Local Authority CME officer, in line with the statutory requirements outlined above.