



Attendance Policy

Review Timetable

The Policy will be reviewed every two years, as set out below:	
Policy reviewed centrally	n/a
Policy tailored by individual schools	January 2024
Policy ratified by Local Governing Bodies	January 2024
Renewal Date	January 2026
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Chilmington Green School Attendance Policy

Introduction

We believe it is of vital importance that our students have good attendance. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve of their best. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is crucial that they attend regularly and should be at school on time, every day that we are open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important, therefore, that you make sure that your child attends regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the students with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance compared to those with the lowest attainment. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at Chilmington Green School is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Chilmington Green School without a good reason creates an offence in law which may result in prosecution. Chilmington Green School defines good attendance as 97% or above.

Aims

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, students, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at Chilmington Green School, this policy sets out:

- Section 1: the practical procedures to be followed at Chilmington Green School in relation to attendance
- Section 2: the measures in place at Chilmington Green School to promote regular attendance by its registered students
- Section 3: the responsibilities of stakeholders, including specific staff, in relation to attendance
- Section 4: the action to be taken by staff if a registered student fails to attend school regularly

Section 1: Practical Procedures

This section sets out the practical procedures to be followed at Chilmington Green School in relation to attendance are as follows:

- The attendance and punctuality expectations of students and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leaves of absence and informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence.
- Information and contact details of the school staff who students and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis (such as a form tutor, Attendance Officer, School Reception) and for more detailed support on attendance (such as Pastoral and Safeguarding teams).
- The school's day to day processes for managing attendance and processes to follow up on unexplained absence.

There are clear links from this policy to our safeguarding and child protection duties as set out in our Safeguarding Policy available on the school website.

The Admissions Register (or "school roll")

As a school, we are responsible for keeping the Admissions Register up to date. This contains specific personal details of every student along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.

We also hold emergency contact numbers for each student. It is our policy to hold more than one such number, so that we have options to make contact with a responsible adult should the need arise.

A student's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances, as set out in [DFE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance, Section 7](#).

The Attendance Register

The register will be taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the school will record whether every student is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

Punctuality and Regular Attendance

The School day starts at 8.35am and finishes at 3.20pm.

Lateness

We expect students to be at on site by 8.30am for a prompt start at 8.35am. It is important that all students are punctual to school, and able to join morning line-up where they receive morning messages from their Form Tutor. Students arriving after 8.35am are marked as late, and except for exceptional circumstances, will be issued a lunchtime detention.

The morning register is kept open for the duration of tutor time, 8.35-9.10am. Where a student has arrived late after the register has closed and the school is not satisfied that the reason for lateness is an authorised absence, the student will be marked as arriving late after the register closes. This is marked as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Absence

Parents¹ must contact the school when their child is absent to explain that absence. This can be done by:

Telephone- 01233 438 774

Email- attendance@chilmingtongreenschool.org.uk

The following information must be provided when contacting the school to inform us of a student's absence:

- full name of student;
- student's Year group and Form;
- full name of person reporting absence and relation to child;
- reason for absence.

Where a reason for the absence is not received by 9.30am on the day of the absence, the school will contact the parents on the same day to understand the reason for the absence.

Where further unexplained absences occur, the school will make further contact with the parent (including foster carers and/ or social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding why the absence has occurred, and when the student will return.

The correct absence code will be inputted into the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained. This must be no later than five working days after the session.

¹ Throughout this document, the terms 'parent' and 'parents' are interchangeable and apply equally to 'parents and carers' and includes foster parents and social workers where relevant.

The school will accept the following reasons for absence:

- illness
- emergency dental/medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement
- attending an interview for a job, college, university etc.

Except in cases of illness, parents will need to ask for permission for their child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences for illness the school will ask for medical evidence in order to authorise absence.

Unauthorised absence is either when a student has truanted from school or when the reason for absence is not accepted. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- holidays during term time;
- staying at home, e.g. waiting for a delivery or the electricity or gas company;
- shopping trips;
- family outings;
- not having the correct school uniform;
- family birthdays;
- visiting or visits from relatives;
- looking after siblings, parents/other family members.

It is Chilmington Green School's decision as to whether an absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. This decision is based upon patterns of non-attendance, the reason provided and whether it is felt medical evidence is required due to patterns of poor attendance.

Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the student can be away from school. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. To request a leave of absence please complete an [Application for Leave during term time](#) form available on our school website.

Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance

This section sets out the measures in place at Chilmington Green School to promote regular attendance by its registered students with Chilmington Green School aiming for all students to have an attendance rate of 97%:

- How the school is promoting and incentivising good attendance.
- The school's strategy for using data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most.
- The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority
- The point at which Fixed Penalty Notices for absence and other sanctions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

Promoting and incentivising

The School will:

- Treat all students and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

- Identify students who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
- Support students back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Reward good attendance. We do this through: Celebration Assemblies; emails/phone calls home; postcards home; informal discussions with student; awarding of School Values points. We are mindful that 100% attendance may not always be possible, and, therefore, do not focus solely on this when rewarding students for their attendance.

Data Strategy

The School understands that as poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early detection is crucial. We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:

- both identify and provide immediate additional support to students and/ or student cohorts that need it
- look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

The School will typically carry out the following analysis:

- Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance (including punctuality) patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some children on certain days;
- Patterns of attendance within sessions, to ensure that all students are attending all timetabled lessons
- Half-termly, termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of students and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against Trust-level, local, regional and national data.

We will use this analysis to identify students who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those students and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning. We will use the data to inform us regarding the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action. We will also provide regular attendance reports to form tutors to facilitate discussions with students and to school leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators and designated safeguarding leads).

Absence reduction strategy

We will put in place strategies to improve poor attendance trends identified through data. This may, for example, mean working to support students in a year group where there is higher-than-average absence.

If we have concerns about a child's attendance, in addition to putting in place personalised strategies in school, we will communicate our concerns regarding attendance with parents/carers, either by telephone or email, in the first instance. Where attendance does not improve, we will request a meeting with parents/carers to discuss what further support can be put in place to improve attendance.

We work with external support services to help remove barriers to attendance and reduce persistent and severe absence.

Data and reports will be shared with the Local Governing Body.

As part of promoting regular attendance the school will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices. See Section 4.

Addressing Poor attendance:

Chilmington Green School considers 97% as good attendance. Chilmington Green School considers students with below 90% as persistent absentees and those with students with under 50% attendance would be considered severely absent. It is essential that Chilmington Green School addresses attendance concerns throughout the academic year. We do this through a series of staged letters, details of these and the logistical process can be seen below:

Communication	Additional Information
Pre-Stage Contact with home	Attendance Team/Pastoral Team to contact home if attendance drops below 97%. This will involve telephone calls, home visits and in-person meeting.
Attendance Letter Stage 1 – Issued to all students who fall below 90% attendance.	This letter highlights consideration for students that have ongoing additional needs. This letter states that any future absences will require medical evidence or appropriate documentation for it to be authorised. This letter may not be issued if there are any extenuating circumstances impacting on attendance.
Attendance Letter Stage 2 – To invite parents to attend a meeting to discuss ways the school can support and help improve attendance with an agreed a 4-week written attendance plan.	This letter is issued to parents if their child's attendance has not improved from previous monitoring and again becomes a concern.
Attendance Letter Stage 3 Formal invitation to an attendance meeting. This is a result of a failure to meet the 4-week attendance target set in the agreed plan.	Although involvement in an attendance meeting is voluntary, it is the last step before a formal referral to the Kent County Council's Attendance Service (PIAS) and potential prosecution. Failure to engage in an attendance meeting will be cause for a referral to PIAS.
A PSP (Pastoral Support Plan) invite can be issued at any point to support any student that requires additional attendance support	The purpose of an PSP is to provide additional attendance support and to coordinate support already in place through other teams/agencies i.e. medical support, SEND or social care.

It is Chilmington Green School's decision whether an absence is classified as authorised or unauthorised. This decision is based upon patterns of non-attendance, the reason provided and whether it is felt medical evidence is required due to patterns of poor attendance.

At times letters and monitoring periods will be adapted to suit different circumstances or situations which may arise and need reasonable adjustments to the logistical process.

Students with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

The School recognises that some students face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include students who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other student and therefore the attendance ambition for these students is the same as they are for any other student.

That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these students face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for students with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a student has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
- Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the student's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, the school will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see the School's SEND Policy for further details on SEND support.
- Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers students may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance, recognising that such arrangements can be for a limited time only.
- Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

Students with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see the School's Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy for further information.

In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising students and parents; and talk to students and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual student's specific needs.

Part-time timetables

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a student's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Please note that a part-time timetable cannot be used as a reasonable adjustment for SEND, unless this is on a temporary basis and as advised by an external agency e.g. Educational Psychologist and agreed with Kent SEN.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it (minimum monthly) with the student and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable.

Section 3: Particular Responsibilities

This section outlines responsibilities of particular members of staff and stakeholders in relation to attendance.

Parent responsibilities

Parents have a legal duty to make sure that their child receives a full-time education, by regular attendance at school or otherwise, as defined in the Education Act 1996. They also have a responsibility to ensure that their child arrives on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn.

Parents should:

- let the school know before or at the start of the day, by telephone, email or by sending a note with siblings that a child is ill or any other reason for absence. The school should be informed again if the absence is likely to continue;
- provide a note or medical certificate to confirm the reasons for absence;
- apply in advance for permission for any exceptional reasons for absence;
- where possible, make doctor and dentist appointments outside of school hours;
- read regular newsletters and emails from the school;
- talk to their child about attendance and punctuality.

Student responsibilities

Students should:

- attend school every day;
- arrive at school on time;
- attend wearing the correct uniform;
- attend all lessons punctually;
- take full part in all lessons;
- uphold the School Values: Ambition; Respect; and Determination;
- bring any difficulties to the attention of their Form Tutor or Pastoral Team

School responsibilities

To promote and encourage attendance and punctuality, we will:

- provide a quality curriculum so that students enjoy learning and want to come to school;
- provide for the needs of all students;
- follow up all unexplained or unauthorised absences with parents/carers;
- provide support to students experiencing difficulties;
- provide a re-integration procedure or programme for students who return to school following a prolonged absence;
- contact parents/carers if there are causes for concern;
- work with specialist services to promote attendance.

Rebecca Wood, Assistant Principal, rebecca.wood@chilmingtongreenschool.org.uk is the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance, safeguarding and pastoral support.

Liz Poynton, Attendance Officer, attendance@chilmingtongreenschool.org.uk has responsibility for identifying and following up with absences, unexplained or authorised.

Students and parents should contact their Form Tutor or Attendance Officer for day-to-day queries about attendance matters.

More detailed support on attendance can be requested from our Attendance Officer, Safeguarding and Pastoral Leaders.

Local Governing Body (LGB) Responsibilities

The LGB recognises the importance of school attendance and will:

- promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual students or cohorts who need it most.
- ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The LGB will also ensure:

- that the attendance policy and its contents are generally made known within the school and to parents of registered students at the school, and
- that steps are taken at least once in every school year to bring the attendance policy to the attention of all those parents and students and all persons who work at the school (whether, or not, for payment).

Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly

This section sets out the action to be taken by staff if a registered student fails to attend the school regularly.

Where a student or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family. Wherever possible, we will keep this person consistent. Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic the school will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the student or family is experiencing. In doing so, the school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support.

In the first instance, the school will support students and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we endeavour to work together with all partners to support students and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with parents, and the student at risk of persistent or severe absence, to understand barriers to being in school, agreeing actions or interventions to address them and keeping those actions under regular review in discussion with students and families. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support, including Kent County Council's Attendance Service, PIAS.

Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners, as follows:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the student this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents (and student where they are able to understand). This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance and may include the school's School Liaison Officer (SLO) from PIAS. The aim of these meetings will be to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the student and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.

Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged, with the school will work with the PIAS to:

- Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- Issue a fixed penalty notice where support has not been successful, or engaged with, and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour.
- Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the student, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, the school will work together with all parties to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

The school will also work with PIAS to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice where support would not be appropriate, such as for an unauthorised holiday during term time.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Kent County Council's Attendance Service (PIAS) issues Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences. This ensures consistent and equitable delivery, helps to maintain good school-home relationships and means that there is not conflict with other enforcement sanctions. The school makes referrals to PIAS when it believes there is a case for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued and then PIAS make a decision about whether to issue.

Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued in the following circumstances:

- holidays in term time;
- overt truancy;
- parentally condoned absences;
- persistent lateness after the register has closed;
- being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any suspension or expulsion.

The unauthorised term-time leave does not have to be consecutive for a parent to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child who is absent without the agreement of the Principal. Fixed Penalty Notices carry a fine of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid between 22-28 days. There is no right of appeal against the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice because the authorisation of absence is the sole responsibility of the Principal. Where Fixed Penalty Notice(s) are unpaid, the local authority may consider taking legal action under [Section 444\(1\) Education Act 1996](#) for failure to ensure a child's regular attendance at school. If this happens, the case will take place before magistrates who could issue the maximum fine of £1000 per parent per child for this offence.