



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is 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.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment
- Celebrate good attendance and punctuality by recognising and rewarding class achievements towards our school attendance target in assembly each week using our **CHAS** and **OTIS** mascots
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and prizes at the end of the year

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is **always** required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. 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 absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked carefully and we monitor pupils closely where absence affects attainment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Children Missing from Education:

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, Part 1, Section 4 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to make arrangements to identify children missing from education in their area.

"Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment and training) later on in life...Local authorities should have robust procedures and policies in place to enable them to meet their duty in relation to these children."

[See CME Guidance 2018 Middlesbrough Local Authority](#)

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us
- Or, you can call into school and report to the school Administration Team at reception

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher if absences persist

- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90%

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

The Education Welfare Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the PAEWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons or assemblies, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.55am** however the doors to Key Stage 1 and 2 are opened at 8.30am and children can arrive at any time from 8.30am to 8.55am and come into school. Children will be supervised and toast is provided for those who would like it.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.20am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Deputy Head Teacher, Head Teacher, PSA and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Requests for absence In Term Time:

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 to take children away in school time.

Any savings made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child's education.

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

Parents should seek permission for a leave of absence during term time prior to the leave, fully explaining the reasons for each request. Each request will then be judged on a case by case basis.

Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as **unauthorised** and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Where a leave of absence has been taken without the permission of the Head Teacher or where a leave of absence has been agreed and the pupil returns to school after the agreed date without explanation, a **Fixed penalty** on a per child, per parent basis, could be issued by the Local Authority.

If a parent fails to pay the Penalty Notice, the notice is withdrawn and the case will proceed to Magistrates Court for the original offence of failure to ensure the child's regular attendance at school.

School targets, and special initiatives:

The school has a target to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting this target.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

We have two school mascots; CHAS (for younger pupils) and OTIS for children in Key Stage 2. **CHAS** stands for – **CH**ildren **A**t **S**chool and **OTIS** stands for – **O**n **T**ime **I**n **S**chool. The mascots are awarded to each class in the different key stages that achieves the best attendance each week. The mascots are highly prized by the pupils and even accompany them on school trips etc! Children in EYFS receive a postcard regularly from Chas to reward good attendance.

Our target is to achieve better than 96% however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in the town of Middlesbrough.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We ask for your full support.

A star badge system which rewards Individual Achievement linked to Behaviour, Punctuality and Attendance is in operation. The Department for Education (DfE) advice on the Equality Act is that schools must not discriminate against pupils by treating them less favourably on the basis of a 'protected characteristic'. Having a medical condition is not a protected characteristic, but having a disability is. In addition the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published information of 'disability' under the Equality Act. It explains that a person is disabled if he/she has a 'physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long- term adverse effect on (his/her) ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

Therefore pupils who have had authorised absences relating to treatment for a recognised

impairment could remain eligible for an attendance award.

Gold Star Scheme

All children are eligible to win a termly gold star badge unless:

- Their attendance and punctuality is below 96%
- There has been a serious breach of our Golden Rules (see Behaviour Policy).

Each term there will be a special 'Golden Event' reward for those pupils who have achieved a star badge that term. This allows children the opportunity each term for children to earn a gold star badge. Each term will be classed as a new start.

At the end of each school year, Three-Gold Star pupils will be awarded a special 'Triple Golden Star Pupil Treat Event'. This is to celebrate and reward children whose attendance, punctuality and behaviour have been exemplary all year.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Miss Smith - Head Teacher

Miss Davison – Parent Support Advisor

In addition the school has support from an Attendance Office and Education Welfare Officer.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.