



CHATHAM & CLARENDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Agreed by Governors: 15 November 2022

1. Statement of Intent

The School adheres to the principles and guidance outlined in '**Working Together to Improve School Attendance**' **September 2022**.

Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students. Regular attendance both in school and in all lessons is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our students and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. See Appendix 1 for school strategies to encourage attendance.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School. See Appendix 2 – school organisation.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

2. Parental Responsibility

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts students at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

Regular attendance both in school and also in lessons, is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

The students with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

It is a parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent, and subsequently, either by phone or by email. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should regularly update the school and inform the school when their child is returning.

Students are expected to arrive by 8.40am. All students that arrive late must report to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

3. Students with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

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 should be the same as they are for any other student. The school will work with parents to overcome barriers to learning, including:

Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils 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 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the student's education, health and care plan is accessed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.

Ensure 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.

Part Time Timetables

All pupils 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.

A part-time timetable **must** only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. At CCGs a part time timetable **will be limited to no more than 6 weeks (and it may be less, dependent on individual circumstances)**, with an agreed phased return to full time education expected over that 6 week period. This will be regularly reviewed with the student and their parents. In agreeing to a part time timetable, the school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and will therefore treat the absence as authorised.

4. The Role of the School Staff

At Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

The Attendance Officer has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues.

Form Tutors complete a register at the beginning of each morning and class teachers once during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark students present, absent or late. They should identify unauthorised absences on the paper register if electronic registration is not available and bring them to the attention of the main office as soon as possible. The form tutor/ class teacher notifies the relevant Head of House of children whose attendance is causing concern.

When a student does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

The Attendance Officer or School Receptionists will contact home either by phone or via School Comms on first day of absence to:

1. Make parents aware that the student is absent
2. Ask for explanation for absence
3. Log parental responses in order to determine appropriate registration coding

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, text messages/emails are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents informed termly of child's attendance figure

5. Timeline for School Action for Poor Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance - Attendance Officer/Head of House to investigate and notify Senior Tutor of concerns
- 90 - 95% attendance - monitored through attendance meetings with SLO, school intervention letters/meeting with parents
- Below 90% - consider Local Authority or Penalty Notice referral where the absences have not been authorised and referral criteria are met.

*Refer to School Based Intervention Flow Chart for guidance on what work should be undertaken by the school prior to referral. In extreme circumstances we may need to adapt timeframes accordingly.

6.Children Missing Education

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

7.Lateness

At Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School the register is taken at 8.45am and 2.15pm. Students arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The student will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.00am am and 2.15pm. Students arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents and may be referred to the School Liaison Officer (SLO). It can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

8. Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

- 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence including arrival after the registers have closed in a term may lead to a referral to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, the Local Authority may instigate court proceedings

9. Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. Where there is doubt, the Headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will **not** be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions)

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **need to** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information

10. Attendance and Lateness

If a new student has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held. The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

11. 'Five Steps

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all students.
2. Discussion with SLO or Local Authority to identify students with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in student attendance and lateness.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff
4. Initiate a Common Assessment (CAF)
5. Referral to Attendance Service

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Local Authority is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings MUST be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

12. Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a student's attendance and/or there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence in a term (Autumn/Spring/Summer) the school will consider the following:

School Liaison Officer Actions

This may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

13. Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
- A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the Local Authority will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

14. Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Family holidays, for whatever reason, cannot be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable cause eg, a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

Requests for holidays in term time will not be authorised.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

15. Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Leave

- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Conduct.
- Local Authority receives a request to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of 10 or more school sessions (5 days)
- Local Authority issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)
- If Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 28 days of issue, Local Authority may instigate court proceedings.

16. Covid Guidance

Students who test positive for Covid or have symptoms should follow current DFE NHS/ PHE guidance. The school will keep parents updated when the guidance changes. Currently students are advised to remain at home for 3 days after the date they test positive. Students may return to school after day 3 (even if they are still testing positive), unless they are too ill to return to school, however there is an expectation that they will return to school after day 10. Students should be coded with 7 if they are confirmed as positive.

APPENDIX 1

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

We will encourage attendance in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of electronic registers at the beginning of each session and at the start of each lesson
- Attendance checks at appropriate times
- Recording of attendance on annual individual student reports
- A certificate for 100% attendance in any one term
- In the Upper School: An improved attendance/punctuality certificate for any student achieving a significant improvement in attendance/punctuality in any one half-term
- In the Upper School: A class reward to be presented to the tutor group in each term with the best punctuality in each term.
- Public recognition (via publication on House notice boards) for any tutor group achieving the highest attendance periodically.
- Holding meetings early in each term, with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulties in school that impact upon attendance
- Sending parents attendance figures, as part of regular monitoring data
- In the Upper School: Attendance for each tutor group will be displayed and charted on Attendance notice board.
- Display attendance rates on Attendance notice boards and remind students constantly of need for good attendance.
- Act upon parental, staff, and agency requests for support with attendance issues, in an appropriate and flexible manner
- Introduce a reintegration plan for students returning after long term absence
- Put in place preventative procedures wherever possible
- Offer a range of interventions and support aimed at overcoming barriers to learning of which may impact upon attendance
- Appropriate liaison with external agencies

APPENDIX 2

SCHOOL ORGANISATION TO PROMOTE GOOD ATTENDANCE

Procedures for Staff:

In order for this policy to be successful, attendance must be a high priority for every member of staff. All staff, teaching and non-teaching must lead by example.

In addition there are the following specific responsibilities:

HEADTEACHER

- To oversee and keep attendance and the procedural policy under review with SMT, but specifically the Senior Tutor, and School Governors.
- To report to governors on levels of attendance.

FORM TUTOR

- Challenge absences on a daily/weekly basis with individual students and ensure any notes from parents are returned promptly to the office in order that registers may be amended and updated.
- Praise good attendance on an individual and group basis.
- Encourage/advise individual students on importance of attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor all students' attendance and report any concerns to the Attendance Officer.

CLASS TEACHER

- To complete the register **accurately and within the first 10 minutes of each lesson.**
- To amend the register as necessary during the course of the lesson. To challenge non-attendance in lessons and inform the office. (The only codes which should be used are /, present, N, absent reason unknown, or L, late.)
- To advise students of the impact of non-attendance on attainment and progress.
- To monitor attendance of individuals in lesson and advise the Attendance Officer of any anomalies.
- To inform individuals of work missed due to absence from lesson and ensure missed work is completed.

HEADS OF HOUSE

- To receive and analyse attendance data for each year group, and their House overall.
- To reinforce good practice with Form Tutors at House meetings
- To promote good attendance via assemblies.
- To offer appropriate support to parents in cases of prolonged and unexplained absence and those with low attendance.
- To liaise with relevant individuals in cases of reintegration for students with poor attendance.
- To liaise with the Education Welfare Service and any other relevant external agencies, on individual cases in conjunction with the Attendance Officer.
- To liaise with the Senior Tutor on a weekly basis.
- To facilitate reintegration and formulate a reintegration plan in conjunction with the Attendance Officer, Senior Tutor and SENCO as appropriate.
- To prioritise the monitoring of those students with attendance of less than 90%,

interview as necessary and offer appropriate intervention strategies to ensure academic progress is maintained. Liaise with the Attendance Officer on a regular basis to review progress.

ATTENDANCE OFFICER

- To send out weekly texts/emails to parent/carers asking for an explanation for absence, where no such text, email or letter has been received.
- To advise Heads of House of individual attendance/punctuality problems
- To place students in detention after every three late marks and send out text/email informing parents of the detention.
- To initiate individual or group interviews as appropriate. To set and monitor attendance targets for tutor groups. To be responsible for the allocation of attendance certificates for individuals in the relevant year group.
- To liaise with Education Welfare Services.
- To make full use of electronic registration system data/reports in the collation of attendance data.
- To publish regular attendance data for each House on the Attendance notice board.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to SMT via the Senior Tutor on attendance matters.
- To liaise between school and home in cases of students with ongoing poor attendance.
- To work with individual students and develop a range of strategies to promote and encourage good attendance.
- To meet with each Head of House on a regular basis, to discuss individual cases with concerns on attendance and provide minutes of those meetings to the Senior Tutor.
- To monitor, in conjunction with Heads of House, those students with less than 90% attendance and make regular contact.
- To be responsible for first day calling or contact with parents via School Comms
- To manage the school's system of registration, advising the Senior Tutor on any incidents of inaccuracy for relevant action.
- To update and amend registers electronically, as soon as relevant information is available, i.e. either by phone calls, texts, emails, notes from parents or when a student is sent home.
- To act as a conduit for the flow of information concerning attendance between school and parents.
- To ensure accuracy of registration for those periods that are designated as morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To produce attendance certificates using the data supplied by the Heads of House.

SENIOR TUTOR

- To organise with Heads of House the range of incentives and rewards available to those with good attendance.
- The Senior Tutor will read minutes of meetings between Head of House and Attendance Officer and monitor to ensure that agreed action plans/strategies have been followed up.

ADMIN SUPPORT

- To update registers (lower/upper school) as necessary during the course of the day.