



*'We Care, We Share, We Believe, We Achieve'*

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction:**

Children's learning is at the heart of everything we do at Childeric, but children cannot learn if they are absent. We therefore aim to ensure that our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

### **The Law relating to attendance:**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

### **We aim to:**

- Achieve minimum levels of pupils identified as persistent absentees
- Achieve attendance levels of at least 96% across the whole school
- Reduce unauthorised absence
- Improve punctuality
- Significantly reduce term time unauthorised holidays
- Create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is accepted as the norm
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance and punctuality between home and school
- Develop partnerships with families to improve attendance of those pupils with high levels of authorised absence and ensure full access to the curriculum

## **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

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 cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have not 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

## **Registration Procedures:**

The school day starts at 8.55 am. The register is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by 9.05 am. The register officially closes at 9.30 am, after which time pupils arriving without good reason will be marked as U which counts as a legal absence.

For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school. The decision to authorise is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

## **Absence Procedures:**

### **Parental responsibility:**

- Inform the school office on the first day of absence (phone, text, email or in person) indicating the reason for absence and the expected return date
- If child is unable to return on expected date, parent to inform school office
- Provide copies of medical appointment letters or cards or any other relevant evidence agreed by the school

### **School procedures:**

- First day phone call for all unexplained absences
- Letter sent home, as required, requesting reasons for any outstanding unexplained

absences

- Monthly register check carried out by the Attendance and Admissions Manager to identify any new attendance concerns and follow up those previously identified. Discuss with Headteacher.
- Initial issues are raised by letters to parents and support is offered to parents which could include a meeting with the Community Support Manager
- If absences persist parents are invited in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher. The parents are offered support and are reminded of the importance of children attending school regularly.
- If this fails to achieve required improvements then a formal meeting is arranged between the Headteacher and Parents. Parents are reminded of the legal requirement that children attend school regularly.
- If attendance continues to be a concern the matter is referred to the Lewisham Attendance Team who will initiate the Local Authority attendance process. This could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or legal proceedings.
- There may be circumstances in which it is deemed necessary to omit one or more of these stages. Examples of this will be if attendance was previously a concern or if the level of attendance is so poor that emergency action is required.
- In cases of high levels of authorised absence we may invite parents to join a multi-agency meeting which might include any appropriate school staff, the Headteacher and other professionals involved with the family. The purpose of these meetings is to offer support and decide a plan in order to improve attendance or offer supplementary support to pupils.
- Pupils who do not attend school for a period of ten days without explanation will be referred directly to the Local Authority as ‘Children Missing Education’
- Supplementary to the register checks, each term we analyse attendance data to identify and challenge persistent absence
- Analyse registration data termly to identify any other factors that may be preventing the achievement of 96% attendance across the whole school
- Annual meeting to review attendance and punctuality policy and procedures

### **Holidays:**

- Holidays are not permitted during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Any parent requiring an absence for exceptional reasons should make their application in writing at least two weeks prior to the time they wish to have leave

- The school will invite parents in to discuss the reasons for the application with the Headteacher
- The school will reply to all applications in writing stating whether or not the absence has been agreed by the school, within 5 days of receiving the application
- The reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated and evidence given. 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 Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated and dates included so that the parent is informed of what date the pupil should be back in school. If these times are not adhered to, it is possible that the parent may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **Punctuality procedures:**

Each month pupils with significant amounts of lateness are identified and letters are sent to parents asking for improvement and offering support should it be required.

For any pupils where punctuality continues to be a problem, parents are invited in to meet with the Headteacher.

If punctuality does not improve, we may refer to the Local Authority who may wish to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality:**

- Attendance and punctuality cups awarded each week in whole school assembly to class with highest attendance and punctuality
- Reporting details about attendance and punctuality awards in weekly newsletter
- Termly attendance and punctuality assembly where certificates, badges, pens and gift vouchers are handed out
- Attendance and punctuality display in reception area promoting good attendance and punctuality and showing class achievements
- Discussions at parent/teacher consultation days
- Individual attendance and punctuality information detailed in end of year report
- Reporting progress about attendance and reiterating expectations in Headteacher's start of term letters
- Attendance and punctuality leaflets included in every new starters welcome pack

**Agreed by Governors: October 2021**

**Review date: September 2022**