Chiseldon Primary & Nursery School Attendance Policy

Status and Review Cycle: **Statutory Annual Review**
Ratified by Governors: **September 2026**
Review: **September 2027**

Vision Statement

At Chiseldon Primary & Nursery School, we believe that every pupil's well-being is paramount. Our attendance policy is designed to foster an inclusive and supportive environment where every pupil feels valued, understood, and empowered.

Core Principles

1. **Understanding and Compassion**
    - "Everyone's body and brain need rest sometimes; taking care of yourself is brave, not wrong." We acknowledge that illness or emotional needs are part of being human, and we encourage open conversations about health and well-being.

2. **Identity Beyond Attendance**
    - "You're not the sum of how many days you were at school." We recognise that a pupil's worth is not defined by their attendance record. Each pupil is unique and valuable, regardless of the number of days missed.

3. **Normalising Absence**
    - "Missing a day doesn't make you lazy or bad; it means you're human." We promote the understanding that everyone faces challenges, and that absence can be a necessary part of growth and healing.

4. **Celebrating Courage**
    - "Some kids show up every day. You show up with courage, and that counts too." We commend those who face difficulties—be it anxiety, SEND, or tough home lives—because showing up, in any capacity, is a testament to their strength.

Attendance Expectations

- **Clear Communication**: We expect all pupils and parents to communicate openly about attendance. If a pupil is unable to attend school, we encourage families to inform us as soon as possible via email at absence@chiseldon.swindon.sch.uk or by calling 01793 740349.

- **Supportive Environment**: Our staff is trained to support pupils facing challenges that affect their attendance. We work collaboratively with families to create individualised support plans when necessary.

- **Positive Reinforcement**: We celebrate good attendance through positive reinforcement strategies, ensuring that pupils feel appreciated for their efforts, regardless of their circumstances.

Procedures

1. **Attendance Monitoring**
    - Attendance will be monitored regularly, and any patterns of absence will be addressed with sensitivity and support.

2. **First Day Notification**
    - We will contact parents on the first day of unexplained absence to ensure the pupil's well-being and to offer support if needed.

3. **Incentives for Attendance**
    - We will promote and incentivize good attendance through various initiatives, recognising the courage it takes for every pupil to attend school.
    - 100% attendance will no longer be the only criteria we use to celebrate individual pupils' achievement where attendance is being celebrated.

4. **Support for Persistent Absentees (PA)**
    - For pupils with persistent absence, we will work closely with families to identify barriers and provide appropriate support, ensuring that the pupil's emotional and physical needs are met.
    - Persistent absence is defined at being below 90%.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance**
    - The Headteacher is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at our school.
    - The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for managing attendance meetings known as SAMs to help parents and pupils attend regularly.

2. **Attendance Officer**
    - The Attendance Officer will manage day-to-day attendance issues and be the first point of contact for parents and pupils regarding attendance.

3. **Staff Responsibilities**
    - All staff are expected to promote good attendance and punctuality among pupils and to follow up on any concerns.

Daily Attendance Management

- **First Day Calling**: The school will contact parents on the first day of unexplained absence.

- **Follow-Up Procedures**: Regular monitoring of attendance data will be conducted to identify patterns and address issues promptly.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

- **Exceptional Circumstances** include:
  - Absences recommended by health professionals.
  - Death or terminal illness of a close relative.
  - Out-of-school programmes of high achievement.
  - Religious observance.
  - Attendance at a wedding or funeral of a close relative.
  - Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account specific facts and circumstances. Requests for holidays will not be approved.

Promoting Good Attendance

The school will implement initiatives to promote and incentivise good attendance, including rewards for classes with the highest attendance rates.

Graduated Approach to attendance support:

- **Stage 1 (Level 1)**: Attendance above 95%.
- **Stage 2 (Level 2)**: Attendance below 95%, triggering the first automated attendance email.
- **Stage 3 (Level 3)**: Attendance below 90%, triggering the second automated email and inviting parents to a School Attendance Meeting (PA).
- **Stage 4 (Level 4)**: Attendance below 80%, requiring an Early Help Assessment and plan.
- **Stage 5 (Level 5)**: Attendance below 50%, potentially requiring a referral to MASH.

Data-Driven Strategies

Attendance data will be regularly analysed to target improvement efforts for specific pupils or cohorts requiring additional support.

Support for Attendance Issues

1. **Reducing Persistent Absence**
   - The school will provide access to support services to address barriers to attendance, formalising support in conjunction with the local authority when necessary.

2. **Individual Needs Consideration**
   - The policy will account for the specific needs of pupils and their families, ensuring fair and consistent application while considering individual circumstances.

Fixed Penalty Notices and Sanctions

Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued for unauthorised absences, including holidays taken during term time, if support measures are not successful or engaged with.

The decision to issue a penalty notice rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct.

Policy Accessibility and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Feedback from pupils, parents, and staff will be sought to continuously improve our approach to attendance.

The attendance policy will be easily accessible on our school website and shared with parents at the beginning of each academic year.

Conclusion

Chiseldon Primary & Nursery School is committed to fostering a culture of high attendance and punctuality. We believe that by working together—pupils, parents, and staff—we can achieve excellent attendance outcomes for all our pupils.

References:

- Department for Education (DfE). Working Together to Improve Attendance.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Appendices:

- **Appendix 1**: Attendance Codes
- **Appendix 2**: School Illness Guidelines

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: School Illness Guidelines

Please check that your child knows how to wash their hands thoroughly to reduce the risk of cross-infection. School attendance could be improved for all, if we wash and dry our hands well and if we are experiencing a cold, we blow in to a tissue and bin it.

Chickenpox	Stay off school until blisters have all crusted over or skin has healed, usually 5-7 days from onset of the rash.
Conjunctivitis/Ringworm	Seek Medical Advice
Diarrhoea and/or Vomiting (being sick)	Stay off school for 48 hours after last bout (this is 24 hours after the last bout plus 24 hours recovery time).
German Measles/Rubella	Return to school 6 days after rash appears but advise school immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.
Head Lice	We ask that parents/carers treat this immediately. Please check hair every night and inform the school if you discover any Head Lice. There is no need to take time off school, as can be treated at home of an evening.
Impetigo	Stay off school until the scores have crusted over and healed or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment
Measles	Stay off school for 4 days after rash appears
Mumps	Stay off school for 5 days after swelling appears
Scabies	Your child can return to school once they have been given their first treatment although itchiness may continue for 3-4 weeks. All members of the household and those in close contact should receive treatment.
Scarlet Fever	Can return to school 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment.
Slapped Cheek	No need to stay off school (infectious before rash), however, school to be advised immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.
Whooping Cough	Stay off school until 5 days of antibiotics have been given, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment has been prescribed.
Shingles	Stay off school only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered. School to be advised immediately as any pregnant staff members need to be informed.

The about information has been provided by the Health Protection Agency

In evaluating the policy, Chiseldon School seeks feedback on the effectiveness and acceptability of this policy with a wide range of key stakeholders within the school setting.