

# Chapmanslade School Attendance Policy

## Rationale

Regular attendance at school is a legal requirement. At Chapmanslade Primary School we expect the highest level of attendance from all pupils. Regular attendance will provide the opportunity for each pupil to develop his/her full potential during his/her time at school. The Governing Board, parents, staff and pupils must do everything in their power to ensure that this objective is achieved.

## Our School Day

The timings for our school day and the statutory registration periods are shown below:

### **Morning Session**

Whole School: 8:55am – 12:00pm

### **Afternoon Session**

EYFS and KS1: 1:00pm to 3:10pm

KS2: 1:00pm to 3:15pm

**At the start of the day**, the lower (KS2) gates are unlocked at 8:30am and the upper (Reception and KS1) gate is unlocked at 8:40am. Outside doors are opened at 8:40am. The head teacher will usually greet children at the gates or in the cloakrooms each morning. Class teachers are in classrooms from 8:40am to greet pupils coming in and to direct them to morning activities. Teachers will usually be available to speak briefly with parents between 8:40 and 8:50am. If necessary, the class teacher may ask a parent to return for a meeting at the end of the day. Parents of Reception pupils are encouraged to settle children quickly into class from September onwards, gradually reducing the amount of time spent in the classroom so that from Term 3 (after Christmas) the children are able to start the day independently. All other pupils should say goodbye to parents at the gate or in the cloakroom. Outside doors close at 8:55am. All gates are secured at 9:00am for the safety of pupils as they use the school site. Parents must exit the site before the gates are secured at 9:00am.

**At the end of the day**, the lower gates are unlocked at 3:05pm and locked again at 3:25pm. Class teachers will dismiss from the upper gate (Reception and KS1) or from the main playground (KS2). Any children staying behind for clubs will be dismissed at the end of the club session from the upper gate, by the club leader.

## Registers

Attendance registers are legal documents and schools have a statutory duty to maintain an accurate register. At Chapmanslade, the register is recorded electronically. Registers are completed at the start of each morning and afternoon session. Registers are opened at 8:50am. and 1:00pm and closed at 8:55am. and 1:05pm Children arriving between 8:55am and 9:00am will receive a late mark in the register.

## Children Arriving Late

We recognise that from time to time parents and children experience unavoidable delays in the mornings. However, the School has a duty to operate a consistent policy for all pupils who arrive late regardless of the reason.

Teachers are in the classroom to take registers until 8:55am. Children arriving after 9:00am will be unable to gain direct access to classrooms because the gates will be locked. Children must report to the school office in order to be admitted into school. Parents must wait with children in the reception area until a member of staff has acknowledged the child's arrival and allowed entry to the building. If all staff members are in meetings or in Collective Worship, the office could potentially be unmanned for up to 30 minutes. Late arrival will have a negative impact on a child and should be avoided. Children arriving after 9:00am when the registers are closed will receive an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session. Frequent late arrival will have a negative impact on a pupil's attendance record and may trigger a formal School Attendance Meeting.

## Pupil Absence

The safety and wellbeing of all pupils is paramount to Chapmanslade School. If a pupil is unable to attend school for any reason, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the school office **by telephone** (we cannot guarantee to have read emails) before 8:55am on the first day of absence. In line with Government directives, notified absences for legitimate reasons are recorded as 'authorised absence'; all other absences are recorded as 'unauthorised absence'. The school will make every effort to contact parents when no reason for absence has been given but cannot guarantee to do so. For safeguarding purposes, and especially if your child makes his or her own way to school, or is brought to school by taxi, parents are urged to notify the School of an expected absence **by telephone** as soon as possible. This will avoid unnecessary concern for school staff.

## Leave of Absence in Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations set out the circumstances in which schools may grant a pupil leave of absence. This regulation applies to all special schools and maintained schools. Therefore schools cannot authorise absence for leave of absence in term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances. In order to comply with the requirement to authorise holidays only in **exceptional** circumstances, Chapmanslade School operates the following procedure in relation to requests for leave of absence in term time:

- The definition of **exceptional** in this context is "unavoidable, short and impossible to schedule at any other time"
- The request must be made at least two weeks before the start of the absence. Any request for a leave of absence during term time that commences fewer than 14 days after the date the request form is handed in will automatically be marked as unauthorised.
- The head teacher has the authority to vary the above rule where short notice is deemed unavoidable, for example, when the request is to attend a funeral. Even in the example given, the absence may still be unauthorised.
- The application must be made by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with, but there is no restriction on *who* the leave of absence is taken with. (This is a matter for the parents not the school)
- Leave of absence which is requested for the following reasons will not be authorised:
  - availability of cheap holidays;
  - availability of the desired accommodation;
  - poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
  - holiday booked by a third party (e.g. grandparent), not knowing term dates;
  - overlap with beginning or end of term.
- Any absence which falls either within the original period of a requested leave of absence, or during consecutive days directly either side of the original period of a requested leave of absence will be deemed unauthorised even when sickness is given as the reason for the absence. The responsibility will be on parents to provide suitable evidence that the child was too ill to attend school. This is to prevent parents requesting for example, 4 days of holiday leave and then reporting that their child is sick for the two preceding days in order to take a holiday but to avoid a Penalty Notice.
- Where a request for leave of absence has been made by a parent with whom the child resides, any estranged parent with parental responsibility will be advised of the request for leave (except where there has been an order made by a court restricting the sharing of information with that parent). The school will not become involved in disputes between parents over requests for leave of absence. If the estranged parent, on receipt of the notification, does not agree with the absence then he/she may put in writing to the head teacher notification to that effect. This will be given consideration should a Penalty Notice be requested for the absence.

## Penalty Notices

Where children have unauthorised absences as a result of a leave of absence in term time, legal action may be taken against each parent under the following legislation:

*Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her child, being of compulsory school age, fails to attend regularly the school at which he or she is a registered pupil. Section 444A allows for a penalty notice to be issued to parents who commit such an offence.*

The head teacher will request a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority if the leave of absence is unauthorised.

## **Attendance Codes**

### **Authorised Absence**

B	Educated off site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (bereavement, agreed special occasions, performance)
D	Dual registration (attending other establishment)
E	Excluded from school
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
H	Annual family holiday
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J	Interview
L	Late before registration closed
M	Medical / Dental appointment (not illness)
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence

### **Approved Educational Activity**

P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience

### **Unauthorised Absence**

U	Late (after registration closed)
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances
G	Family Holiday (not agreed or days in excess)

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Head Teacher:**

- To have overall responsibility for whole school attendance
- To consider requests for leave during term time
- To request penalty notices from the Local Authority if parents choose to take unauthorised holidays during term time (see section on penalty notices below)
- To convene a School Attendance Meeting with parents when an individual's attendance gives cause for concern
- To refer children to the Children Missing in Education Service as necessary

### **Class Teacher:**

- To keep accurate attendance registers
- To inform the head teacher of any pupils with poor or irregular attendance
- To encourage pupils to attend regularly and to arrive on time

### **School Business Manager:**

- To maintain the SIMs school system
- To identify those pupils earning Gold, Silver and Bronze attendance certificates
- To alert the head teacher if a child's attendance falls below the key indicator of 95%
- To try to contact parents when reasons for absence have not been provided
- To inform parents about the outcome of any requests for leave of absence in term time
- To write to parents when a pupil has arrived late to school 5 or more times in a term
- To liaise closely with the Local Authority Admissions Department with regard to children on roll

### Parents:

- To ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time
- To contact the school on the first day of any absence **by telephone**
- To avoid booking routine dentist, doctor or optician appointments during the school day
- To provide written evidence of medical appointments that require a child to miss school
- To avoid requesting any leave for their children during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances (see definition above)

### Promoting Good Attendance

The head teacher, staff and governors of Chapmanslade School believe that high attendance is part of good citizenship of the school community because high attendance allows teachers to teach sequences of lessons that have been planned to promote academic progress for all pupils. High attendance also promotes equity of opportunity by allowing all pupils to access the wide range of social, sporting, musical and artistic experiences available at school. Therefore, it is our policy to reward good attendance in the following ways:

- Attendance stickers for pupils whose attendance improves significantly
- At the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms, Bronze Attendance Certificates are awarded to those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance that term; Silver Attendance Certificates are awarded to those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance for two terms; and Gold Attendance Certificates are awarded to those pupils who have achieved 100% attendance for the full year.
- A very special reward in the form of gift vouchers will be given to any pupil who achieves 100% attendance throughout KS1 (2 years) or throughout KS2 (4 years)

If attendance falls below the expected standard, the school works closely with the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer. The following measures will be implemented:

- When attendance falls to 95%, the pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and parents may be contacted.
- In particular, the number of full weeks attended will be monitored because repeated failure to attend for a whole week has a significant impact on a child's ability to access the full curriculum.
- Where no improvement is seen or if attendance falls further, a formal School Attendance Meeting may be called.
- A formal review of the targets set in the School Attendance Meeting will be held. A further review period may be set.
- In cases of persistent low attendance, following a formal School Attendance Meeting and at least one review meeting, a referral will be made to the Local Authority which could culminate in a Penalty Notice or prosecution.

### **Review**

This policy will be published on the school website and shall be reviewed no later than every three years by the Governing Board.

Approved – September 2016

Next Review – September 2019 or sooner if statutory guidance changes