

# Charnwood Primary School



## Attendance Policy

### November 2015

Reviewed	Date:	<b>November 2015</b>
	By:	<b>Ms N Jassat Head teacher</b>

Agreed at the Governor Committee Meeting <b>School Improvement</b>	Date:	<b>17 December 2015</b>
	Signed by Chair of Committee:	<b>Mr E Makda</b>

Ratified by FGB	Date:	
	Signed by Chair of FGB:	<b>TBR</b>

Next review	2 Years	<b>November 2017</b>
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**Revision History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details of change</b>
November 2014	Reviewed by Ms N Jassat
April 2015	Edited by Ms N Jassat
November 2015	Reviewed by Ms N Jassat

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## Policy

The staff, at Charnwood Primary School, agree that all children should attend school regularly and punctually to enable them to make the best possible progress in all areas of their education. Attendance and punctuality are highlighted in the School Prospectus and the school's expectations are explained to new parents during induction procedures. Letters are sent to parents of all pupils, including those in foundation stage 2, at the beginning of each academic year to remind them of their responsibilities in respect of their children's attendance. The school takes part in initiatives, such as Cool Cats, provided by the Education Welfare Service to promote good attendance.

The head teacher is responsible for deciding whether an absence should be authorised or unauthorised. This responsibility is delegated to class teachers. However, teachers should only authorise absences if they are satisfied that the reasons given are genuine. In cases of doubt, the absence should be referred to the head teacher.

SIMS.net Attendance module, via OMR sheets and an optical mark reader, is used to record pupils' attendance and provide data for monitoring purposes. The Attendance Administrator is responsible for ensuring that the database is maintained and that data is monitored regularly.

The module is updated daily and parents are contacted in respect of all unexplained absences by text message, if parents fail to respond the text message the absence will be unauthorised. The school also operates a "red card" system for pupils who have an irregular attendance pattern and a high level of absences. For these child parents are asked to provide sufficient medical evidence in the form of appointment cards or prescribed medication. Any absence not covered by medical evidence will be unauthorised.

A half-termly analysis of each school's absence is undertaken by the EWO.

Attendance is monitored monthly, by the attendance officer in liaison with the Education Welfare Officer. Letters are sent to the parents of pupils who fail to meet the school's target, with a second letter being sent if there is no significant improvement by the next monitoring session. Those pupils who do not improve after the second letter are formally referred to the Education Welfare Officer, who advises appropriate further action.

Absences will not be authorised for any pupil whose attendance is erratic but who does not suffer from an ongoing medical condition unless the parents provide medical evidence. Proof of an appointment with the doctor or prescribed medicine with the pupils name may be accepted as evidence. NB. Parents must not be asked to pay for a medical certificate. Children names will be added to the class monitoring list.

Same day sibling absence is not condoned.

Foundation stage pupils are included in the schools' monitoring statutory school age letters are sent stressing importance of attending school, if improvement is not seen appointment with the Head Teacher may be made.

Good attendance is rewarded by certificates to individual pupils in order to emphasise the importance of good attendance.

## **Leave of absence**

From September 2013 there are changes in the law regarding children taking leave of absence during term time. Leave of absence (holidays) for a child in any year group will not be authorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Absences that are not authorised may result in a fine for each adult with parental responsibility.

Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority not the school.

From 1st September these penalty notices will be:

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice and
- £120 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Families will be expected to use the school holiday closure during the year for the purposes of family holidays, family weddings, visits to relatives and travelling abroad for medical treatment. These will not be considered as exceptional circumstances.

Application for leave must be made in writing in advance by the parents with whom the pupil normally resides. The names of pupils who fail to return after extended unauthorised absence may be removed from the school roll. Parents will then have to go through Admissions to re-apply for a school place.

## **Unauthorised absence**

Fixed penalty notice may be issued to those parents of a child who is of compulsory school age and has 20 or more unauthorised absences on their record in any twelve week period.

## **Religious observance**

Code "R" is only used for the actual day of religious observance. Any additional days taken will be unauthorised.

The staff also recognise that there are health and safety implications for children who do not attend school regularly, especially if the school is not aware of the child's whereabouts. This is particularly so in the case of extended holidays. Therefore rigorous procedures have been developed to administer applications for extended absences and these will be monitored regularly.

# Registration times

## Morning

Doors open	8.30 am
Registration	8.40 am
Late	8.50 am
Register closes	9.00 am

## Afternoon

	<b>FS2 &amp; KS1</b>	<b>KS2</b>
Whistle	12.40 pm	1.15 pm
Late	12.50 pm	1.25 pm
Register closes	1.00 pm	1.35 pm

## Foundation One

	<b>FS1 AM 2.5hrs</b>	<b>FS1 AM 3hrs</b>	<b>FS1 PM 2.5hrs</b>	<b>FS1 PM 3hrs</b>
Doors Open	8.10 am	8.30 am	12.30 pm	12.30pm
Registration	8.10am	8.40 am	12.30 pm	12.30 pm
Late	8.30am	8.50 am	12.40 pm	12.40 pm
Register Closes	8.40 am	9.00 am	12.50 pm	12.50 pm
Session Ends	11.10 am	11.10am	3.00 pm	3.30 pm

# Procedures – Classroom

## Daily

- OMR sheets should be filled in and returned to the office by 9.00 am.
- Pupils who arrive after 8.50 am are to be marked late to enable admin staff to monitor punctuality.
- Pupils who arrive after 8.50 am should be sent to the office to ensure that their presence in school is recorded. This is to ensure that they are counted in the event of an emergency which calls for evacuation of the building as they will be absent according to the register.
- Any child who arrives after 9.00am will be marked absent and a valid reason must be given if the absence is to be authorised.

## Weekly

- 1) Absence OMRs should to be completed and returned to the office by Tuesday morning. Official registers cannot be printed until all outstanding absences have been cleared. The following guidance may be helpful when filling in the weekly reports.
  - a) Short term absence (1-3 days)

Text message will be sent on first day of absence if parents fail to inform school of absence. Text message states if parents fail to respond to text message the absence will be unauthorised. Text message will be resent on second day of absence. If no response by third day telephone call will be made to parents. If no response from parents absence will be unauthorised.
  - b) Absences of 3 or more days  
Parents need to contact the school before 9am informing the school why child is absent. If child fails to return by third day text message will be sent, if no response from parents follow on call will be made.
  - c) Absence more than 5 days  
If absence is longer than five days and reason provided by parents will ask for medical proof to authorise absence. If parents fail to contact school and do not respond to text messages and phone calls a referral will be made to EWO.
  - d) Exceptional circumstances  
If child has illnesses such as chickenpox, mumps, measles etc. Absences will be authorised. If child has had surgery will request medical evidence (i.e. discharge form). Parents to advise recovery time recommended by hospital.

The following should be taken into account when completing absence OMRs -

- 2) Only absences which have been explained satisfactorily, (ie. by a note from a parent, direct verbal communication from parent or other responsible adult, message from office re. telephone call) should be authorised. Explanation by the pupil is not satisfactory.
  - a) Information about absences, received by office staff, is passed on to class teachers via the absence record sheet in the register folder. Please check this sheet when completing absence OMR. If medical evidence required, please ensure sufficient medical evidence seen before absence is authorised.
  - b) Ensure that you use the correct code. Common errors are
    - i) Using M instead of I for periods of illness.
    - ii) Not following Head's instructions in respect of extended holidays.
    - iii) **NB.** Absences in respect of extended holidays will usually be cleared by the office staff according to the head's instructions.
    - iv) Not following advice of EWO in respect of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. If medical evidence is not seen do not authorise.

- v) Using R for additional days off at the times of religious festivals. Only the actual day of the festival should be coded R. Additional days should be coded as O unauthorised.

### **Monthly**

- Letters, in respect of pupils whose attendance is below the school's target, are prepared by admin staff and distributed to class teachers, to be sent home to parents via the pupil.  
**NB.** If a teacher thinks it is inappropriate for letter to be issued a written explanation should be provided and the letter returned to the office. Records will then be updated and the teacher consulted before any further action is taken.

### **General**

- Register folders should be kept tidy to avoid damaging OMR sheets as damaged sheets will not feed through the optical mark reader. The only documents which should be kept in the register folder are -
  - (1) Attendance OMR
  - (2) Absence OMR
  - (3) Absence record sheet
  - (4) Dinner register
  - (5) List of pupil on attendance monitoring list
- (a) Letters explaining absences do not usually need to be retained after absence sheet has been completed. However, any paperwork in respect of a pupil on the monitoring list should be sent to the office for retention as it may be required as evidence if unsatisfactory attendance leads to EWO intervention and prosecution.

# Procedures – Admin

## Daily/Weekly

### Monday

- Process OMR sheets.
- Process OMR sheets for any outstanding sessions from previous week.
- Check for any missing marks and deal with them immediately.
- Print unexplained absence report for session.
- Check telephone messages for reasons for absence.
- If no explanation for absence send text message

**NB.** All absences should be checked whenever possible.

- Record reasons for absence on form in class register.
- Deal with any pupils due back from abroad as set out in Procedure re. Applications for Extended Absence.

**All of the above tasks are to be carried out daily.**

### Tuesday

- Daily tasks as Monday.
- Process completed absence OMRs.
- Issue reminders to class teachers re. outstanding absence OMRs.

### Wednesday

- Daily tasks as Monday.
- Process any remaining absence OMRs.
- Deal with unexplained absences as Tuesday.

### Thursday

- Daily tasks as Monday

### Friday

#### AM

- Daily tasks as Monday

#### PM

- Process PM session.
- Check for missing marks and deal with them immediately.
- Print attendance OMRs for next week.
- Print absence OMRs for current week.

# Monitoring

## Daily

- Check electronic diary to see if any pupils are due back from extended absence and proceed as per instructions under "Extended Absences"

## Weekly

- Reports 1 and 2 are compared with those of the previous week and marked to show rise or fall in achievement. Annotated copies are passed to the deputy head who shares the information with pupils and staff in assembly to reinforce the importance of good attendance.
- If there are significant changes in any year/registration group additional reports are generated and analysed to identify possible problems.
- The percentage attendance report is used to identify pupils with poor levels of attendance. Individual records are produced for those pupils who have fallen below the school's target and further action taken if necessary.
- The record of any pupil with less than 85% attendance is reviewed.
- The record of any pupil who had a period of extended absence is monitored. The record is passed to the SBM if the child's percentage drops.

## Monthly

- Records of pupils with less than 90% are checked. Unless a pupil has an ongoing illness his/her name is added to a monitoring list and a standard letter is prepared and passed to the class teacher who sends it home with the pupil. If the class teacher does not agree with letter being sent or has any further information to explain the absences e.g. an ongoing medical condition which requires frequent doctor/hospital appointments, he/she should return the letter to the office with a written explanation. A note will be added to the pupil's record and no further action will be taken without referring to the class teacher.
- The record will be monitored the following month and a further standard letter will be sent if there has not been any improvement. Parents will now be asked to provide sufficient medical evidence to authorise absence.
- Reports are discussed with the Education Welfare Officer if pupil's attendance does not improve after 2 standard letters. The EWO may advise additional or alternative action, e.g.
  1. formal referral,
  2. an Attendance Panel meeting.
- This advice is shared with the class teacher.
- Absences, in respect of blue card pupils, may be coded "O" by office staff on receipt of any notification of an absence as the Head teacher has already authorised the coding by signing the letter. The code may be amended on receipt of medical evidence if this is provided.
- Sibling absences are monitored to ascertain if children are absent at the same time. (See separate section Sibling Absences).
- Pupils with 20 or more unauthorised absences in any 12 week period are referred to the Education Welfare Officer who may arrange an Attendance Panel meeting with the pupil's parents and the Head teacher. The purpose of the meeting is to explain the effect frequent absence is likely to have on the pupil's

achievement and discuss any problems which prevent their child attending regularly. It is emphasized that the meeting is to help the parent overcome any difficulties they may have and not the beginning of legal proceedings. Targets are set and the pupil's record is monitored weekly. Small rewards may be given for improvement.

## **Punctuality**

Pupils who arrive more than 10 minutes, but no more than 20 minutes after the official registration time, i.e. before 9.00 am in the morning or 1.10 /1.35 pm in the afternoon, should be marked "L" – late before register closed.

Those who arrive after those times should be marked "U" – late after register closed. Any pupil with 20 or more "U" marks will be referred to the EWO.

Punctuality is also monitored and letters sent to the parents of children who are often late. If punctuality does not improve, appointments are made for the parents to see the Head Teacher.

Various strategies may be used to encourage pupils to come on time e.g.

- Sticker chart/reward schemes
- Individual signing in sheets in the office.

If punctuality does not improve after letters have been sent, all lates may be coded "U", late after register closed which is an unauthorised code. Twenty unauthorised marks lead to a formal referral to the Education Welfare Officer, who may advise a panel meeting with the pupil's parents and the Head teacher.

## **Extended absences**

### **Applications**

Parents who wish to take their children abroad for extended periods of absence and asked to complete an application form.

#### **Admin staff must –**

- emphasise that only fully completed applications will be considered;
- emphasise that a destination address must be provided;
- explain conditions and possible penalties regarding extended holidays/absences during term time.

#### **On receipt of forms, admin staff should –**

- check that form has been completed fully – destination address is very important - and
- photocopy tickets/travel confirmation, if provided;
- print attendance report for current and previous years and enter percentages on form;
- check pupil's record card for previous extended absences and enter details on form;
- enter pupil's name in electronic diary on return date;
- Pass application form to Deputy Head teacher (FS/KS1).

**The Head teacher will return the form, after deciding whether absence should be authorised and admin staff will –**

- make 2 copies of the application;
- send 1 copy to parent and 1 to pupil's class teacher;
- enter the relevant code on the pupils SIMS attendance record when determined by the deputy head;
- enter details in electronic diary;
- file original in pupil's record card.

**Electronic diary will alert admin staff, if a pupil is due back, who will –**

- Check register to ascertain if pupil is back.
- Check SIMS data to ensure that absence has been correctly recorded i.e. Authorised (H) or unauthorised (G) as designated by the head teacher. Record will be adjusted, if necessary, and a copy printed and filed in the pupil's record card.
- Check total number of unauthorised sessions and if there are more than 10 (5 days), issue penalty notice if exceeds 10 sessions (5 day).

**If pupil has not returned, admin staff will -**

- Make phone calls to the home number in the first instance and the nominated contact if there is no reply from the home number.
- Record times and dates of all telephone calls and any information obtained on the application form.
- Email EWO informing them in first instance
- If exceeds 20 unauthorised days and confirmation received from nominated contact that child is still abroad, may be taken off role (on advise of EWO).

The record of any pupil who returns from an extended absence will be monitored weekly to ensure that he/she attends regularly and does not miss any further session unnecessarily.

## **Sibling Absence**

Sibling absences are not condoned. All reports of same day absence should be queried, whether parents volunteer the information by phoning the school or enquiries have to be made by the office staff. Parents should be asked –

- To confirm that both children are really ill;
- The nature of the illness;
- Whether the children have seen the doctor and been prescribed any medication.

It must be explained that same day absences will not be authorised, in the future, unless medical evidence is provided.

## Appendix 1

### Letter 1: Poor attendance

Date: .....

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: ..... Class: .....

Attendance for year to date: .....%

I have been reviewing your child's attendance record and I am concerned because his/her overall achievement is below the school's minimum target of 95%.

He/she should stay at home if unwell but you should note that medical evidence from your family doctor needs to be provided if your child is absent; this could be in the form of doctors/hospital/dental appointment card or evidence that prescribed medication has been provided. Any absences not covered by medical evidence will be marked as unauthorised, You must ring the school office, or ask another adult to deliver a message, **before 9.00 am** if your child is not well enough to come to school.

Pupils may also have time off for urgent medical and dental appointments if necessary. However, non-emergency appointments should be made for out of school hours whenever possible. If you do have to take your child out of school during school hours you should show some evidence of an appointment – a letter or appointment card.

You should ensure that your child arrives punctually each day as children who arrive late miss a very important part of the school day and also disrupt the learning of other children by entering the class after the lesson has started.

Your child's name has been added to a monitoring list and I will continue to review his/her attendance regularly. His/her record may be referred to the School Medical Officer or the Education Welfare Officer if I do not see an improvement.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms. N. Jassat**  
**Head teacher**

## **Appendix 1**

### Letter 2: Poor attendance (no improvement)

Date: .....

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: ..... Class: .....

As a school we are required to monitor children's attendance and punctuality. During a routine meeting between myself and the school's Education Welfare Officer, it was noted that your child attendance so far this academic year is .....%. This is below the 95% that the Government considers a minimum acceptable level for attendance, 5% absence is the same as missing 1 day every 4 weeks. It is therefore crucial that your child's attendance improves significantly from now on.

To support any further absence we will now require medical evidence (this could be in the form of doctors/hospital/dental appointment card or evidence that prescribed medication has been provided) for any future absence. Any absences not covered by medical evidence will be marked as unauthorised, and this may become a legal issue. If your child is genuinely ill, medical evidence may enable us to get extra help for them so that their education does not suffer.

If there is no improvement in your child's attendance and no medical evidence is received, we will inform the Education Welfare Service, who are responsible for enforcing the law regarding your child's attendance at school.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your co-operation in this matter and I hope you will support your child by ensuring that their attendance in school improves.

Yours sincerely

**Ms. N. Jassat**  
**Head teacher**

**Appendix 1**

Letter 3: Poor Attendance meeting with Head Teacher arranged

Date: .....

Dear Parents/Carers,

Child's Name: .....

Class: .....

I have been reviewing your child's attendance record and I am concerned because his/her overall achievement is below the school's minimum target of 95%.

Therefore, I would like to make an appointment for you to see me on:

.....

to discuss this further.

If you are unable to attend the meeting and wish to rearrange please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms. N. Jassat**  
**Head teacher**

**Appendix 1**

Letter 4: Lates Letter

Date: .....

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: .....  
.....

Class:

I have been reviewing your child’s attendance record and I am concerned about their punctuality. Your child has already been late on ..... occasions this year.

Your child is missing an important part of each day. In addition, their late arrival interrupts the work and concentration of every other child in the class. I must ask you to ensure that your child comes to school on time each day.

I will review your child’s record again in the near future and may have to introduce special procedures to monitor their punctuality or refer it to the Education Welfare Officer if I do not see a significant improvement.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms. N. Jassat**  
**Head teacher**

**Appendix 1**

Letter 5: Lates Letter: Appointment made with Head Teacher

Date: .....

Dear Parents/Carers,

Child's Name: .....

Class: .....

I have been reviewing your child's attendance record and I am concerned about their punctuality. Your child has already been late on ..... occasions this year.

Therefore, I would like to make an appointment for you to see me on:

.....

to discuss this further.

If you are unable to attend the meeting and wish to rearrange please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms. N. Jassat**  
**Head teacher**

## Appendix 2A - Extended absence

### Charnwood Primary School

#### APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

This form must be completed before the head teacher can consider your application for extended absence. You must complete all sections of the application and you will be asked to show your tickets or other proof of travel dates before you child's leave of absence. A separate application must be completed for each child.

A copy of this form, showing the head teacher's decision will be sent to you.

Please ask for help if you do not understand any part of this form.

**Child's name:**

.....

**Class:** ..... **Date of Birth:**.....

<b>First day of absence from school:</b>	<b>Date of return to school:</b>

**I request absence for my above named child to accompany me on a visit to (full address of destination):**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Reason for visit:** (The head teacher is unable to consider your request unless you give a reason).

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Siblings at other school:** If you have requested leave of absence for siblings at another school (including secondary school) please state below:

Child's Name	Year	School

I will arrange for the following friend/relative to notify the school if there are any changes to my travel arrangements which may effect my date of return and understand that you may contact that person in the event of my child not returning to school on the agreed date.

**Name of friend / relative:**

.....

**Address:**

.....

.....

**Telephone number:**

**I understand that:**

- Term time leave of absence cannot be authorised due to changes in government legislation, unless there are genuine exceptional circumstances.
- A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the Education Welfare Service on my child's return to school.
- Where a child has had 2 periods of unauthorised leave for which the parent has been issued with a Penalty Notice (for each occasion), on the third occasion, no Penalty Notice will be issued and that parent will be taken straight to Court under the higher level aggravated offence. **This means that if found guilty the parent may be subject to a much more severe penalty i.e. a maximum fine of up to £2,500 or 3 months in custody or, a community order which may involve them doing a number of hours of unpaid work, and will have a criminal record.**
- My child's name may be removed from the school roll after 10 days of absence (20 sessions) of unauthorised absence.
- The school will notify me if my child's name is to be removed from the roll. I will have to apply for a place through the Local Authority's Admission Department and will only be allocated a place at Charnwood Primary School if space is available.

**Name in capital letters:**

**My contact number is:**

**Signed:**

..... (Parent/carer)

**Date:**

.....

**Head teacher's decision:**

**AUTHORISED** from ..... to ..... (..... sessions)

**UNAUTHORISED** from: ..... to ..... (..... sessions)

Date that fixed penalty notice might be issued .....

Date on which 20<sup>th</sup> session of unauthorised absence will occur is:..... after which your child may be taken of roll.

Comment

Signed.....Head teacher Date.....

**This section is for office use only:**

Form checked by.....

Date received.....

Child's D.O.B: .....

Attendance – Current year: .....%

Attendance – Previous year: .....%

Previous extended absence: YES / NO (Academic Year: ..... Sessions: .....)

SEN: YES / NO

SATs year: YES / NO

Other.....

Ticket/travel confirmation seen: YES / NO

Copy of confirmation retained: YES / NO

Entered onto holiday diary:

Copy sent to parent:

Copy sent to class teacher:

**Communication:**

Date	Person from CPS	Spoke to	Notes/Comments

**Pupil has not returned on expected date:**

Telephone call 1:

Date..... Time.....

Call made by.....

to.....

Result.....

.....

.....

.....

Telephone call 2:

Date..... Time.....

Call made by.....

to.....

Result.....

.....

.....

.....

Telephone call 3:

Date..... Time.....

Call made by.....

to.....

Result.....

.....

.....

.....

Refer to Admin procedures manual – Procedure re. Application for Extended Absence if parent or contact confirms that the pupil is still at address given on Page 1.

Code	Meaning	Use for	Present - Authorised – Unauthorised -	P A U
/	Present – am		P	
\	Present - pm		P	
B	Educated off site	Secondary school induction days	P	
C	Other authorised circumstances		A	
D	Dual registration	Pupils who attend another school for part of each week	P	
E	Excluded		A	
F	Extended family holiday - agreed	More than 10 Days	A	
<b>G</b>	Extended family holiday – not agreed		U	
<b>H</b>	Family holiday – agreed	Up to 10 days	A	
<b>I</b>	Illness	All sickness absence, including time spent in hospital but <b>not</b> hospital/doctor appointments.	A	
J	Interview		P	
<b>L</b>	Late – before register closed	To be used for pupils arriving after registration but before registers close (See Procedures – Registration Times)	P	
M	Medical/dental appointments	Appointments only – usually only one session, not whole day. Do <b>not</b> use for ongoing illness or for a pupil who has been admitted to stay in hospital	A	
N	No reason yet given for absence		U	
O	Unauthorised absence		U	
P	Approved sporting activity		P	
R	Religious observance	Only one day to be coded R – additional days should be coded O unless parents have applied for holiday.	A	
S	Study leave		A	
T	Traveller absence		A	
<b>U</b>	Late – after register closed	See Procedures – Registration Times	U	
<b>V</b>	Education visit	Any visits, trips including residential, which are supervised by school staff.	P	
W	Work experience		P	
X	School closed to pupils	Teacher days	N/A	
Y	Enforced closure	e.g. snow, alarm failure	N/A	
!	Non compulsory school aged absence	Used to show that attendance is not required for part time pupils in F1.	N/A	
#	School closed to pupils and staff		N/A	
*	Pupil not on roll		N/A	