

# CHELLINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND FEDERATION



## **Happiness Through Wisdom**

*"Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel."*

**Proverbs 20:15**

**Christopher Reeves VA Primary School/**

**St. Lawrence VA Primary School**

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**April 2022**

**Review Date: April 2024**

## **Rationale**

The Governing Body of the Chellington Federation knows it is of fundamental importance to maximise the attendance of all pupils in order that they benefit fully from the educational and social opportunities available to them at school.

The legislation that supports this, and on which this policy is based, includes:

The Education Act 1996 (Section 7)

The Education Act 2005 (section 115)

The Federation gives a high priority to communicating to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. To achieve this, positive home-school links are established together with effective communication systems which are employed whenever a concern about individual attendance arises.

Any problems affecting a child's attendance are quickly identified with a clear, focussed approach being employed aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance.

## **Aims**

1. To monitor levels of attendance and punctuality in order to ensure that a child's right to education is valued.
2. To ensure good practice in dealing with attendance and absence issues

Guiding Principles:

- all pupils are supported and valued, their good attendance and punctuality being acknowledged and praised
- staff are made aware of correct and timely registration procedures
- each register is completed accurately at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions and to monitor attendance
- parents are asked to notify the school on the first day of any absence
- attendance procedures are monitored and evaluated regularly by the Executive Headteacher
- the Executive Headteacher reports on the overall attendance pattern at each meeting of the Full Governing Body
- full use is made of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service to develop and maintain this policy

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

### Staff

Improving attendance and maintaining it at a high level is considered a whole school issue and so all staff are expected to promote the concept. Class teachers should acknowledge pupils' absence when they return to school, welcoming their return, and without applying undue pressure on individual children, encourage and celebrate days or weeks of full attendance. Class teachers should start the morning and afternoon sessions punctually and ask the additional adults to settle latecomers.

Children who achieve 100% attendance will receive a special certificate at the end of each term and then at the end of the school year.

## Parents

Parents are seen as responsible for ensuring regular attendance and punctuality and also for having their child properly dressed and equipped as well as being ready to learn. They are expected to notify the school on the same day, by 9am, if the child is absent or late via the school office by phone call, e mail or written note. Such messages are passed on to the relevant class teacher. The absence of any pupil will not be authorised until the parent provides a satisfactory explanation.

Parents are requested to avoid, wherever possible, making medical/dental appointments during the school day. Parents are not to take family holidays in term time. Further guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

## **Procedures**

### Registration

All registers at St Lawrence Church of England Primary School and Christopher Reeves Church of England Primary School are maintained using the SIMS Attendance computer module.

Registers are marked by the class teacher promptly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and the total number of children present indicated on the register.

The registers are marked between 08.50 and 09.00 and any child arriving after that time will be marked as late. The register closes at 09.20. The register is taken at 13.15 for the afternoon session.

In line with Government guidelines parents have been advised of the need to contact the school on the first morning of a child's absence. If no such notification is received the school is required to contact the parent/guardian. Any letters or messages regarding absences are recorded by Office Staff.

All children who arrive late for school, i.e. after registration has been taken, parents must report to the School Office and signed in the 'In and Out register book / file', located in the school office. The register is then amended with a late mark for the pupil concerned and the class total adjusted.

The following codes are used when completing the Absence Report form:

C	Other authorised circumstances
I	Illness
O	Unauthorised circumstances
F	Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
G	Unauthorised holiday
E	Excluded
L	Late
U	Late after 9.20am
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Education visit
B	Educated off site
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)
M	Medical/dental appointment
R	Religious observance
T	Traveller absence
W	Work experience/educated at home

## Following up absences

If there is no contact from a parent on the morning of the first absence the School will contact the parent by telephone. The matter may be referred on to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if the absence is not explained or if it lasts to the point where it causes concern. The Executive Headteacher will contact the parent and make them aware of the legal requirement regarding school attendance. If necessary a formal referral will be made to the EWO for further action to be taken.

## **Monitoring Attendance**

All attendance is closely monitored by the School Office Manager who will advise the Headteacher if there is a concern about individual pupils. The school attendance target is 96%. Percentages are reviewed termly and where pupils fall below 92% attendance, they are tracked weekly to ensure that they do not become persistent absentees. A register check is also completed and submitted to the EWO half termly. Pupil's attendance is also reported termly to parents and is recorded on interim and end of year School Reports.

Where the pupil's attendance falls below 90% the Headteacher will report to the EWO and request support or intervention as deemed necessary.

The school will also alert parents to poor patterns of punctuality, and through agreed actions, work together to improve this.

## **Request for Absence**

Parents can submit a request for a planned absence to be authorised; this must be submitted four weeks in advance, except in the cases of short notice medical appointments or unavoidable circumstances such as a family funeral.

## **Holidays in term-time**

With effect from September 2013 new legal regulations came into force changing the previous rules regarding holidays taken in term time and removing the school's discretion in such matters. Parents do not have a legal right to take their child out of school during term time and the Executive Headteacher can only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Any such parental request will be considered on its own merits. Examples of exceptional circumstances can include:

- attending the funeral of a close family member
- holidays for families of service personnel, if they have been on a long operational tour that prevents family contact
- holidays for families of professions that are refused leave during the school holidays (eg emergency nursing, police)

In the case of family holidays, one period of up to 5 days will be considered per annum, and the family will be required to provide authorised paperwork from their place of work. Having considered these points the Executive Headteacher's decision is then final.

If a request is turned down and it is subsequently found that such a holiday is taken the School will record the absence as unauthorised. The school can ask the Education Welfare Service to consider a Penalty Notice. It is the Governors recommendation that this is initiated only if a family takes a second unauthorised holiday, or where an absence exceeds 5 school days per annum.

## **School Refusal**

This is usually an indication of some deeper problem in the child's personal or family life as well as major emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties. In such cases support from the Education Welfare Office and other agencies would be sought by the school. If parents are concerned about any outside issues affecting their child's attendance they should contact the School.

## **Guidelines for Parents**

There has probably never been a more important time for making sure that attendance at school receives a high priority in the minds of children, parents, staff and governors. Children who miss out on education are at an immediate disadvantage relative to their peers, at great cost to themselves and to the community as a whole. By working together, all those concerned to keep absence from school to the lowest possible figure can more effectively seek to ensure that as few children as possible experience more than the occasional difficulty. Taking such a task seriously is in everyone's interests.

Governors play an active role in promoting good attendance and is a regular agenda item at Curriculum Committee and Full Governing Body meetings.

## **Review**

This policy statement will be reviewed every two years. In the review the Governors will consider the effectiveness of this policy statement in raising attendance and reducing lateness. They will also evaluate the implementation of the stated procedures.

This policy has been reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and will be renewed in April 2024.

If you require a hard copy of this policy, please contact the school office.