



Chester International School

Attendance Policy

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Name	Signature	Date
Katrina Brown <i>Principal</i>		28/01/2020
Neil Jones <i>Chair of Governors</i>		15/10/2019

Introduction

- This policy will be reviewed annually.
- Regular reviews provide an opportunity to revise objectives and how they are delivered to reflect developments that have taken place.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Cheshire West and Chester County Council.

This attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- Admissions
- Anti-bullying
- Child protection
- Exclusion
- Safeguarding
- Special educational needs
- Teaching and learning
- Behaviour and rewards.

It is very important, therefore, that students attend regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and pupils via www.chesterinternational.co.uk.

For the impact of the policy to be maximised, the Assistant Principal will take overall responsibility for co-ordinating, implementing and monitoring the policy.

1. Aims and Targets

- 1.1 It is the policy of Chester International School to celebrate achievement. To be successful, students require the highest level of access and engagement with quality educational opportunities. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our students. Our school will create a culture in which excellent attendance is the norm. We expect 100% attendance and punctuality from all our students.
- 1.2 We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised, whenever there is concern about attendance. If there are problems which affect a student's attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, students, Education Welfare Consultants and other Agencies to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach, aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times. This policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.
- 1.3 Parental support for these provisions enables the school to maximise learning and achievement for all.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Parents

Under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 a 'parent' in relation to a child or young person is defined as:

- The natural parent of a child, whether they are married or not
- Anyone who although not a natural parent has Parental Responsibility for a child
- Any person, who although not a natural parent, has care of a child

Parents have a duty to educate their children "*suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs which they may have*" either by regular attendance at school, or otherwise, under Section 7 of The Education Act 1996. Parents whose children are registered at school are, therefore, responsible for ensuring that they attend punctually, regularly and stay at school.

3. Registration Procedures

Students are expected to attend school for the full academic year unless there is good reason for the absence.

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all students. They are legal documents that have to be marked twice daily. The register may be required in a Court of Law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for nonattendance. The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the DfE.

One school day is marked as two sessions - a.m. and p.m. The attendance register is taken at the start at the start of school during lesson 1 and once during the afternoon session (Team Meet after lunch). **Registration will formally close at 09:30am and 14:15pm daily.**

On each occasion school must record whether every student is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent or unable to attend due to other exceptional circumstances.

Chester International School will meet its statutory obligations by reporting data on authorised and unauthorised absence in the school, in accordance with the Department for Education requirements.

4 Absence due to illness

- 4.1 Any medical absences in excess of 14 sessions (7 days) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. If no medical evidence is received then the absence will be coded as unauthorised. Medical evidence can take the form of either a dated GP/Nurse appointment card, a dated note from the GP/Nurse written in the student's planner, a compliment slip signed and dated by the GP/Nurse, a prescription or proof of prescribed medication relating to the current illness. Parents/carer's should be aware that ten or more unauthorised absences over a term may result in them receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice. (See below)

- 4.2 Medical and other essential appointments for students should be made out of school hours. On occasions where this is unavoidable, e.g. specific hospital clinic hours, parents/carers must make school aware of such appointments in advance by showing an appointment card/confirmation via the Attendance lead at attendance@chesterinternational.co.uk or phoning Chester International School on 01244 735610. Students must sign in/out for appointments at the front desk.
- 4.3 We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number.

5. **Unauthorised Absence - Fixed Penalty Notices**

There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised Absence: When school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received then absences cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised Absence: When school has not received a reason for an absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. Reasons where an absence will be unauthorised include, but are not limited to:

- Parents giving children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as shopping, birthday or to look after siblings.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been explained or supported with evidence.

Parents/carers should be aware that Chester International School may contact the Local Authority if a student has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If proved guilty, the parent/carer will receive a criminal record.

6. **Leave of Absence**

- In line with the amendments made in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, Our Principal may not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any parent/carer wishing to request Leave of Absence for their son/daughter should request in writing, by emailing the principle and attendance lead well in advance.
- It should be noted that if any application is declined and a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised day's absence occurs, then Chester International School may apply to

the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court. If proved guilty, the parent/carer will receive a criminal record.

7. Long Term Absence

When the school has been notified that a student will be unable to attend school for a period of time, due to medical reasons, school will liaise on a regular basis with the LA and other appropriate agencies to promote the achievement and reintegration of those students with long term absence. The LA may provide home tuition in some instances.

8. First Day Contact

- 8.1 Chester International School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and that they will complete accurate registration processes at the allocated times for the morning and afternoon session.
- 8.2 It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform school of the reason for a student's absence before 8:30am through the absence email (attendance@chesterinternational.co.uk) or phoning the school (01244 735610) and on every day of absence thereafter. If no contact is achieved from parent/carer on their child's first day of absence Chester International School will send an email. Parents/carers may be contacted by telephone if no response is received from the email.
- 8.3 If no contact is achieved with the parent/carer of an absent student on the first day of absence, school will try to contact the parent via all other contacts listed. A home visit may be carried out or police informed if there are safeguarding concerns.

Although it is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify school of any absence it is at our discretion how this absence is coded in relation to authorised or unauthorised absence.

If attendance does not improve then it is likely that parents/carers will be invited into Chester International School for a meeting to discuss the poor attendance/punctuality with a view to resolving the situation. We work closely with Education Welfare Consultants, other outside agencies and the Local Authority in an effort to improve attendance without the need for any legal intervention.

9. Lateness and Punctuality

- 9.1 Parents are expected to ensure that their children are present in school between 08.00-8.30am.
- 9.2 Children arriving after 8.30am should report to the front desk where they will be issued a late mark and the minutes late will be noted. Closure of the register will be

at 9.30am in line with DfE guidance. Students who arrive after 9:30 will be coded a 'U' – unauthorised absence.

Parents/carers should be aware that we may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court. If proved guilty, the parent/carer will receive a criminal record.

9.3 Strategies to tackle lateness will include:

- a) Parents are routinely informed when students are late at the end of a school week.
- b) A system of rewards and giving punctuality a high profile.
- c) Inviting parents into school to discuss lateness.

9.4 The Attendance Lead will consult with the Dean of Students if there are any causes for concern. This may be after a period of absence, a pattern of missed absences or continued lateness.

9.5 The Dean of Students and Assistant Principal will analyse patterns of attendance with the school's Attendance Lead and co-ordinate strategies. These may include home visits and meetings with parents and students. The Attendance Lead, Dean of Students and Assistant Principal will meet regularly to monitor statistics and to discuss students causing concern and who are in need of tracking.

9.6 The Assistant Principal will report attendance patterns to the Senior Leadership Team and highlight concerns regarding specific students and the setting of attendance targets every half-term.

10. Strategies to address Poor Attendance

- At Chester International School the attendance of all our students is monitored throughout the academic year. Students who have attendance of below **95%** parents/carers will be contacted (See below).
- If there are concerns regarding attendance parent/carers will be notified. If attendance does not improve then it is likely that parents/carers will be invited into Chester International School for a meeting to discuss the poor attendance/punctuality with a view to resolving the situation. We work closely with Education Welfare Consultants, other outside agencies and the Local Authority in an effort to improve attendance without the need for any legal intervention. As a final measure when the attendance of a student does not show any improvements without good reason, we will contact the Local Authority regarding legal sanctions.
- Those students who have attendance of **90%** and below are categorised as 'Persistent Absence' students (P.A.). We will be actively targeting this cohort of students and may suggest appropriate interventions/support to raise their attendance.

What can Parents/Carers can do to help?

- Let school know as soon as they know a student is going to be absent
- Document the students absence by emailing attendance@chesterinternational.co.uk
- Try and avoid making appointments during term time or normal school hours
- Do not allow the student to stay off school unless it is unavoidable

What parents can do if they are worried about their child's attendance:

- Talk to your child, it may be a simple reason that school can help with.
- Talk to your child's Coach, Attendance lead or Dean of Students.
- Arrange a meeting at Chester International School with our pastoral team.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review of this Policy

This policy is monitored as a matter of course by those responsible for its day-to-day operation. Attendance data and trends are analysed regularly to identify trends and patterns and initiate appropriate responses.