

# Charlestown Primary School



## Attendance Policy September 2023

**Approved by: Full  
Governing Body**

Date: September 2023

**Last reviewed on:**

September 2022

**Next review due by:**

As required

## Principles

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

High levels of attendance will give your child the best opportunity to achieve and progress to their full potential.

If your child is absent from school, you must phone Mrs Aslam,  
Attendance Officer

**0161 740 3529 - option 1 by 8.45am**

**It is the parent/carers responsibility to report school absence.**

## School Day

**8:20-8.45am** - School gates open

**8.40am** Classroom Doors open

**8.45am** - The school gates are closed. Registers are taken in class.

**9:30am** - If your child arrives after 9:30am their absence will be marked as an unauthorised absence. This also means that your child has missed 45 minutes of vital learning time and persistent unauthorised absence may lead to a fine.

## Definitions:

Every half day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Any information about the cause of each absence is always required. We reserve the right to request evidence to support some absences.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school because of an unavoidable cause. In a case where a child has prolonged absence, families will be asked for medical evidence for this to be authorised.

**Unauthorised absences** are those missed sessions that do not meet the authorised criteria of this policy (see below). The government makes it very clear that schools are not to authorise any term time absences unless for very exceptional circumstances. No holiday requests will be authorised.

**Minutes late** is when your child arrives at school between 9.00am and 9.30am

**Unauthorised late** is when your child arrives at school after 9:30am. This is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

**Absence that would be considered authorised:**

- Genuine illness (we may ask for evidence if absence is common)
- Medical appointments (with evidence)
- Bereavement (Funeral) of immediate family
- Wedding of immediate family member (1 day)
- Religious observance
- External exam
- Visiting a new school

**Absences that would not be authorised:**

- Birthdays
- Holidays
- Extended leave to visit relatives.
- Oversleeping
- No uniform
- Shopping
- Haircut or headlice
- Off school due to a family member illness or family circumstance overseas
- Days off without an explanation
- Arriving after 9:30

Please note this list is not exhaustive. Cases will be looked at on an individual basis.

**Parents and Carers' Responsibilities**

It is the legal obligation of parents and carers to ensure that their child attends school **on time, every day that school is open**. We request full support of our attendance policy, and we will happily work with any families who need support to improve their child's attendance.

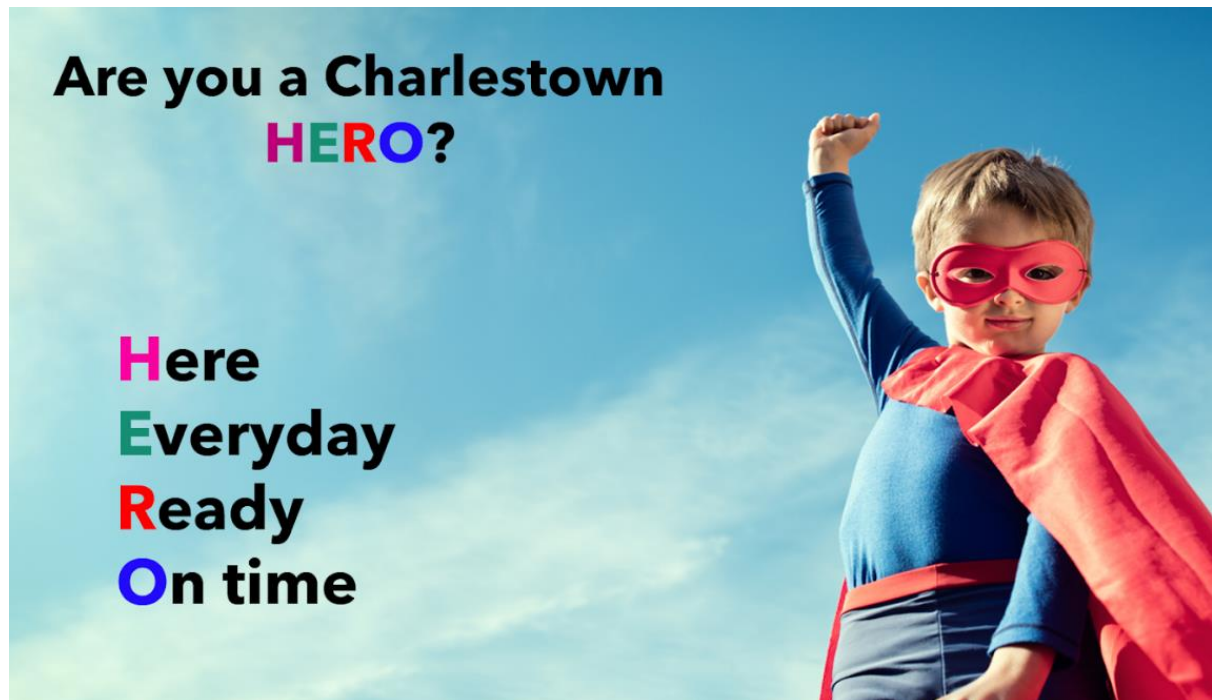
**Parents should make medical and dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible.** Where appointments do fall within the timings of the school day, the school office should be notified and shown evidence (for example a medical letter).. During the school year, there are certain times when it is **vital** that children are in school for assessment purposes. May and June are particularly important months for assessments.

For any requests for leave, parents should write to the Head Teacher outlining the reason and the duration of the absence.

**School targets**

Charlestown Community Primary School expects excellent attendance. We call this being a Charlestown Hero

'Here Everyday Ready Ontime'



- Children with excellent attendance will be entered into a prize draw every term
- Children with 100% punctuality will be entered into a prize draw every term.
- Punctuality and attendance is monitored weekly by the Attendance team which comprises of the attendance officer, Headteacher, family support worker and Deputy Headteacher for inclusion.
- Should a child's absence fall below 90% or they are persistently late, parents/carers will be contacted by the Attendance Officer or family welfare lead to support families to improve this.

## Punctuality

**It is imperative that children learn the importance of punctuality to fulfil their own role in society as they grow into young adults. This role modelling of good practice begins in primary school. All children should enter school using the blue gates before 8.45am**

The attendance team monitor punctuality weekly and ensure that any late is followed up with a call to ensure that this occurrence does not become a habit. If a child is late more than once, the family welfare lead will be in contact to get to the bottom of this concern.

## Attendance Percentage between 90% and 96%

Parents are contacted by the attendance officer and a conversation should be had with the class teacher to discuss the impact and decline in attendance. Support will be offered to the family if required and appropriate. Early Help may be offered if appropriate. This will then be monitored for improvement and discussed at attendance meetings. If there is no improvement, parents/carers will be invited in for an informal meeting with the Attendance Officer, Family welfare lead or Deputy Head to discuss how we can best support the family.

## Persistent Absentees (Attendance below 90%)

Children with an attendance below 90% (instead of the previous 85%), will be placed on the persistent absence register. The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of children attending school at this percentage and is required to have interventions to support families. Children whose attendance falls below 90% are called “persistent absentees” by the government, whatever the reason for their absence. The DfE collect information of Persistent Absentees through submission of our school census three times a year.

When a child’s attendance falls below 90%, parents will be invited to a more formal meeting with the Attendance Officer and the Family Welfare Lead. A member of the senior leadership team or other professionals may also be present. The reasons for the absence will be formally discussed in addition to the actions to be taken. Early Help will be advised and a parenting contract drawn up to support better attendance in the future. A parenting contract is a joint venture between home and school to ensure there is correct support in place so that children are in school, on time, every day. It will outline actions for home and school and ensure that we work collaboratively to ensure that attendance improves. These actions will be reviewed for improvement after a set amount of time - agreed in the meeting.

If Attendance continues to remain under 90% after continued intervention and support, a referral will be made to the Senior Attendance Officer at the Local Authority to discuss Legal Interventions.

Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.

### **Fixed Penalty Notice**

Any unauthorised leave of absence of ten sessions (5 days), over any academic year, will be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). A penalty notice will be issued to each parent for each child. The penalty notice incurs a fine of £120 to be paid within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. It is important to note that the FPN is issued by the Local Authority and the school has no financial gain from these.

If the requested leave totals 10 sessions or more, upon return from the absence, a FPN will be issued. In all cases we must receive as much supporting documentation for your reason of absence as possible.

### Procedures if your child is absent from school

- Parents/carers **must** call the school on the first day of the absence by 8.45am
- The reason given will be recorded on the child's register document.
- Parents/carers **must** call the school **every day** the child is absent unless school is aware and have agreed a long-term absence. For example, if the child was recovering from an operation. In situations such as this, the school will make regular phone calls home to keep in touch.

If parents/carers do not contact the school and the school is unable to get hold of them, the school will conduct a home visit to ensure that the child and everyone in the family is safe. If we are concerned for the safety of the child or a member of the family, a referral will be made to the advice and guidance hub (at children's services) and/or a Police welfare check may be requested. .

### Illness

If your child is poorly often, we might recommend a referral to the school nurse to give you more support.

We may also request medical evidence to authorise the absence.

Sickness and diarrhoea should be a rare occurrence. If your child is physically sick or has diarrhoea from a viral infection, we would advise that they must stay off school for 48 hours from the last time they were sick or had diarrhoea. However, there is the odd occasion where a child is sick for reasons other than a tummy bug. The school will consider the exclusion period needed on a case-by-case basis.

## Procedures for absence due to persistent illness

Where a child is persistently ill, the school is available to provide support for the child and the family. Parents/carers are required to contact the Attendance Officer to inform the school of medical appointments and if they are absent for long periods during serious illness. In this instance, the school will require written medical evidence, for example, an appointment letter. The school may also request a GP stamp to show attendance at a doctor's surgery.

Home learning can be arranged for prolonged and diagnosed illnesses.

## Family Holidays

The government is concerned about levels of pupil absence from school and has therefore made changes to the regulations regarding authorisation of leave. Since September 2013, it is no longer possible to authorise family holidays. A holiday will be marked as unauthorised and will be recorded on the register. A penalty notice will be issued to each parent for each child. The penalty notice incurs a fine of £120 to be paid within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. It is important to note that all holiday and fine warning letters are chronologically recorded to support the issue of a fixed penalty notice.

## Responsibility for Attendance

As with safeguarding, attendance at school is everybody's business. Parents/carers and all staff are ultimately responsible for attendance and punctuality matters.

Our attendance team meet weekly to monitor attendance and ensure no concerning absence is overlooked. We also monitor punctuality and ensure that any late is followed up with a call to ensure that this occurrence does not become a habit.

## Summary

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely

with parents/carers in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. We work within the law; Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003 and the Local Authority Code of Conduct. Please see the Request for Leave of Absence Information and Form for any request for leave during term time.