



Attendance Policy

Scotch Orchard Primary School

Review Date: September 2026

Attendance Team

Attendance is everyone's responsibility, but key staff in school supporting this crucial area are:

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|
| James Chapman | Head of School | J.chapman@scotchorchard.staffs.sch.uk |
| Alfie Eke | Assistant Headteacher | A.eke@scotchorchard.staffs.sch.uk |
| Emma Thornton | Office Manager | Emma.thornton@scotchorchard.staffs.sch.uk |
| Amy Lowe | Administration Assistant | Office@scotchorchard.staffs.sch.uk |

Attendance Matters

Our School's Attendance Target

97%

The Main Principles

There is a direct link between academic attainment and attendance at school. Scotch Orchard Primary School is therefore committed to working with parents and carers to ensure all students achieve as high a level of attendance as possible. Students are set a target of achieving at least 97% attendance. However, after discussions with families, it was agreed that a target of 94.6% would be acceptable to meet the school's attendance strategy.

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure children of compulsory school age attend school regularly. Students should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless there is good reason or prior agreement is given from the school.

| Attendance during one school year | Equates to the following number of days absent | Which is approximately this many weeks absent <i>100% = 39 weeks</i> | Which means the following number of lessons are missed |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 90% | 19 days | 4 weeks | 100 lessons |
| 85% | 29 days | 6 weeks | 150 lessons |
| 80% | 38 days | 8 weeks | 200 lessons |

Schools are required to take a register twice a day (am and pm), and this shows whether a student is present, engaged in an approved off-site education activity, or absent. If a student of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. The decision lies with the school as to whether the absence will be authorised. For this reason, information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Absence

Absence can only be authorised by the Head of School, within the boundaries set by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Headteachers/Heads of School are unable to authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.

Please do remember that parent/carer illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve issues), family holidays are not acceptable reasons for absence. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Arriving after registration has closed will also result in an authorised absence being recorded.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the child's best interests to miss school for such emergencies which are being dealt with by adults. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

Reporting Absence

If your child is going to be absent from school, it is important that the school is made aware.

Reporting Same Day Illness

If your child is absent from school, the parent/carer must telephone the absence line (01543 227400, option 1) to explain the cause. We ask that you do this daily unless there is an illness or condition requiring a set isolation period such as sickness/diarrhoea which requires your child to remain at home for 48 hours following their last bout of illness.

If no contact is made by 9.30am, please be aware that school will do all it can to ensure your child is safe and well. Initially, if we do not hear a reason for the absence, a call will be made from the school office in order to check the well-being of you and your child. Failure to respond to the telephone call or if the absence is not for a legitimate reason, will result in the absence being recorded as an unauthorised absence (O).

If school cannot make contact with the parent/carer by 11am, we may conduct a 'safe and well-being' check by visiting the home address, or may contact the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who may also carry out a home visit. If we have concerns over a child's safety or wellbeing following this home visit, the police may be called.

Reporting Future Absence for Appointments

All appointments, such as dentist and doctors, should be made for outside of school hours where possible.

Where it is necessary to attend an appointment during the school day parents/carers should telephone the school office (01543 227400), speak to the school office in person or email office@scotchorchard.staffs.sch.uk

Students are expected to attend on the day of an appointment for as much of the day as possible.

For the absence to be authorised, evidence of the appointment must be given to school by way of an appointment card or letter.

Requesting Leave in Term Time

Parents/carers should not take students out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. This leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Any request needs to be made in writing giving as much notice as possible, 4 weeks as a minimum.

Leave of absence form

A Leave of absence form must be completed for any leave of absence (including just one day). This can be done for any reason: funerals, holidays, weddings.

Leave of absence letter 1

If a parent requests the leave, parents will be informed of the decision made by school in a letter.

Leave of absence letter 2

If a parent does not request the leave and it is suspected that the child has been taken on holiday, the parent will be informed in a letter from the school and will be requested to provide evidence to support the reason for the leave of absence.

Term time holidays will NOT be authorised, unless in exceptional circumstances.

These exceptional circumstances can only be agreed by the Head of School and therefore must be requested using the Leave of absence application form. Evidence will be required, if necessary.

If request for leave is unauthorised, and you still choose to take your child out of school for a holiday or another reason, you will be issued to pay a fixed penalty of £80 per child per parent, rising to £160 per child per parent if this is not paid within 21 days. If the penalty is unpaid after 28 days, court proceedings for the offence of 'truancy' may be initiated.

The above documents can be found in the Appendix.

Religious Observance

We recognise that students of certain faiths may need to participate in religious observance when the day falls in term time. The school will issue a day authorised absence in these cases.

We ask that parents/carers notify the academy in writing in advance where a day's religious observance is required. Please email: j.chapman@scotchorchard.staffs.sch.uk with this request.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

As a school, we are concerned about any child who may be missing education because in addition to their educational development, their safety and wellbeing may be at risk.

The Education Welfare team works with schools in support of children who are absent from school and their whereabouts unknown, This might be:

- A child who is not at their last known address and
- Has 10 or more days of continuous absence without explanation, or
- Has left school suddenly and their destination is unknown.

Registration and Punctuality

For safeguarding purposes, a register is taken at the start of the school day and at the start of the afternoon session. These two registers make up a student's overall attendance percentage.

Morning and Afternoon Registration:

Morning arrival is at 8:45am for all year groups. The morning register **closes at 9:00am**.

The afternoon register is at 1:00pm for Years Reception – Year 6, and at 12:15pm for Nursery children.

Lateness

Any child who arrives up to 15 minutes after their arrival time (see above) will have their attendance recorded with a late mark (L). Parents/carers will be expected to enter via the school office and sign their child into school using the electronic system. Any child who arrives after 9:15am will be recorded as unauthorised absence (U).

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance and lateness will be monitored in a weekly meeting with the office manager and senior leadership team, and the following actions show the actions that will be taken to support students' attendance.

At all stages we want to work **with** parents/carers to support their child's attendance. The stages of support work as a guide only and different methods of support may be more suitable for some students.

Stage 1: If attendance levels fall below 95%, a message via My Child at School (MCAS) will be sent to parents highlighting this concern.

Stage 2: If attendance levels fall below 90%, or lateness is frequent, a letter will be sent to parents highlighting this concern. A meeting will also be arranged between the Leadership Team and the parents to discuss if there is anything further that school can do to support the child and/or their family.

Stage 3: If attendance continues to fall, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who will contact parents to investigate and resolve the matter.

Relevant Links

Please see below for further information and the Staffordshire Code of Conduct:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Attendance.aspx>

Attendance Rewards

In consultation with parents, the school's approach to rewarding attendance has been reviewed and refined through collaborative discussions. The effectiveness and impact of these revised measures will be evaluated on a termly basis.

To promote pupil engagement, children will actively track their own attendance each half term using attendance trackers aligned with the 'Little Heroes' campaign. Each day a pupil arrives at school on time; they will mark their tracker accordingly.

Pupils who achieve 100% attendance for a half term will be awarded an Attendance Certificate in recognition of their commitment. In addition, those who meet or exceed the school's attendance benchmark of 94.6% will receive a separate form of acknowledgment. Full details of these rewards are outlined in the school's Attendance Strategy.

APPENDIX 1 – Leave of Absence Form

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES – PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST (to be completed by parents/carers only)

Pupil's Name D.O.B Class.....

Pupil's Name D.O.B Class.....

I request permission for the above named pupil(s) to be granted leave during the school term.

Reason for request

.....
.....

Dates of absence

From To No of school days

Address where we will be staying.....

Email address.....

Phone Number.....

I/We understand that if leave is agreed:

- if travelling abroad, I / we will supply a copy of the return travel documentation.
- I / we will supply the name and phone number of a contact person whilst abroad.
- if I / we take leave without authorisation I / we am / are aware that I / we may be issued with a penalty notice. If I do not pay the fine, the case may be referred to Court which could result in a fine of up to £1000 per child and a criminal record.
- In exceptional circumstances, or for repeat offences, penalty notices may not be issued, and cases may be referred straight to Court.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Parent/Carer Name | Parent/Carer Name |
| DOB | DOB |
| Address | Address |
| Signature | Signature |
| Date | Date |

Request **agreed / denied**

Signed Head Teacher

Appendix 2

Dear (both parents should receive an individual copy)

CHILDS NAME / DOB

We have reason to believe that **CHILDS NAME** absences during **DATES** were due to unrequested leave. The reason for this is because: (select which is appropriate or enter your own)

- School CALLED & RECEIVED A FOREIGN DIAL TONE,
- School CALLED YOU & YOU INFORMED US YOU WERE ON HOLIDAY,
- CHILD TOLD TEACHER,
- HOME VISITS COMPLETED NO ANSWER

As a school we want to make every effort to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. Where no reason for absence is provided within 5 school days or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is legitimate the school is required to amend the pupil's attendance to be recorded as unauthorised.

We understand that you may wish to offer an alternative explanation for your child's absence. We will, therefore, allow you 5 school days from the date of this letter to provide evidence to us that supports a legitimate reason for the absence. **If we do not receive appropriate evidence, by this time, then we will continue to code your child's absence as an unauthorised.**

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct and the "Working Together to Improve School attendance" statutory guidance (effective 19th August 2024). The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

For a **First** offence the Penalty Notice fine would be:-

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

For a **Second** offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 28 days

Following the second offence **every new offence within the 3-year period, will be prosecuted** under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is **£1,000 per parent, per child**. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve his full potential.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 3

Dear (Both parents should receive individually named letters)

CHILDS NAME / DOB

Thank you for your leave of absence request informing us that **CHILD** will be absent from school from **ABSENCE DATES**.

You will be aware that the Department of Education made important changes to the law for families wanting to request leave of absence in term time. The changes made it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Local Authority and school governors support this; therefore, students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

I have considered your application very carefully. Although I understand the reason for your request, I am unable to approve leave of absence in this instance, as I believe the circumstances are not exceptional or in line with school policy. **Therefore, your child's absence from school during this period has been recorded as Unauthorised Absence and will be recorded in the attendance register with the "G" code.**

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. This is in line with Staffordshire County Councils Code of Conduct and the "Working Together to Improve School attendance" statutory guidance (effective 19th August 2024). The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

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Our key priority is to ensure that your child is as successful as possible and can achieve their full potential.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be planned for the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher