

# CHANTRY HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

## Attendance Policy

### HISTORY

Issue No	Author/Owner	Date Written	Approved by Governors on	Parents Consulted/One Voice Consulted	Comments
1	JRE	Sept 2009	13.05.2010		

Related Documents: Attendance Matters and Attendance Really Matters Leaflets, Fast Track Procedures, Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Holiday Form

### Aim

At Chantry High School we have three core values:

To achieve more  
To listen more  
To look after each other more

School attendance is a significant factor in achievement and well being. Chantry High School aims to promote good attitudes towards attendance and punctuality through providing a supportive and challenging environment which encourages young people to attend school and within which they can grow and achieve.

We believe that it is the responsibility of the whole school community to promote excellent attendance.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Good attendance and punctuality is best promoted when staff are on time to their lessons and registration. All registers should be taken within the first 15 minutes of the period beginning. Form time registration should be completed at the start of registration.

#### Class Teacher

- Take an accurate record or attendance at the start of **every** lesson using SIMS. The student should be recorded as present (I), not present (N). Existing codes (unless they describe a student as absent who is clearly present) should not be overridden. Therefore, for example, an *M* should not be replaced with an *N*.
- Update the register to record the presence of students who arrive late indicating how many minutes late they were.
- Students who are not on the list must be added to note their presence.
- If for any reason SIMS is not available the class teacher must ensure an accurate paper record is made and sent to the office, and/or a record of absence emailed to the appropriate Year Manager.
- Staff covering lessons for other members of staff must complete their register for them.
- Consult with the SIMS Manager (TMI) if they are unsure how to use SIMS to register students.
- If a student has been present for previous sessions in the day and is not present in your lesson it is advisable to contact the Year Manager to alert them to this.
- Provide appropriate work with regular feedback for students who are absent from school for prolonged periods due to ill health or other agreed reasons.

#### Subject Leaders

- Ensure subject group lists are accurate and up to date on SIMS.
- Ensure staff are on time to lessons.
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality to lessons within your subject area
- Implement action plans to improve attendance and punctuality within the subject where concerns have arisen and evaluate their effectiveness.

- Report termly on the level of absence, attendance and punctuality concerns etc considering at risk groups such as LAC, BME, SEN etc.

### Form Tutors

- Take an accurate register every form time, including assembly sessions.
- Record late arrivals on the register, noting the minutes late.
- Ensure all absences are followed up with notes from home (if not in the planner these should be kept and given to Year Managers for filing).
- Record all correspondence from home regarding student absence, past or future (medical notes).
- Promote positive attitudes to attendance through the use of the school rewards structure and postcards home.
- Consult with the Year Manager any causes for concern regarding attendance and/or punctuality.
- Respond to absenteeism consistently and with care (eg. a child who has had a prolonged absence may need some support on their return).
- Provide information for parents/carers about the Attendance policy and give guidance on how they can support their child in attending school regularly and on time (leaflets available).
- Assist the year manager where appropriate in implementing an action plan to support students whose attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern, including liaison with parents.
- Record reasons for absence accurately, using the appropriate codes (see list in appendix).

### Year Managers

- Ensure all records for attendance, punctuality and absence are accurate and up to date.
  - Planned absences recorded in advance
  - N's are updated with correct absence code
  - Missing registers are chased daily
- Make 'first day absence' calls by 9.30am each morning and by 1.45pm each afternoon, prioritising the at risk students (note where a LAC child or a child who is subject to safeguarding is absent and no contact can be made the Education Attendance Officer (EAO - SRU) should be informed immediately. For all students where no contact can be made, a letter will be sent home indicating the absence and requiring a response from parents/carers giving a reason for absence.
- Contact parents of young people who have been absent for 3 or more days, and where no further contact with school has been made regarding absence.
- Inform the EAO if a student is off for 3 or more days and no contact has been made with home.
- Ensure tutors have accurate absence lists to chase each week
- Ensure the appropriate team leaders are included in emails regarding missing registers and are informed when registers are incomplete or completed wrongly.
- Implement school protocols for lateness each week
- Contact parents and implement action plans as per the agreed protocols where a student's attendance is a cause for concern (see appendix)
- Ensure accurate 'traffic light' letters are sent each half term and follow these up with appropriate actions
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through pro-active use of the school's reward structure and through postcards home.
- Liaise weekly with EAO weekly regarding students whose attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern.
- Support the Fast track proceedings and penalty notices through liaison with EAO, ensuring all appropriate students are targeted.

### Heads of School-Pastoral

- Conduct assemblies which focus on attendance and achievement each term.
- Support the Year Managers in implementing the agreed protocols on absence and punctuality.
- Conduct 'return to school' interviews where students have been absent for 3 or more days to ensure they are supported on their return and are able to integrate back into school with little stress.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality in each year group evaluating level of absence, reasons given and impact of actions where areas of concern have been identified. This should have particular focus on those at risk of becoming persistent absentees.

- Monitor the effectiveness of the intervention plans and the consistency of their application.
- Report termly on the level of persistent absence, attendance concerns etc considering at risk groups such as LAC, BME, SEN etc.
- Keep the Assistant Head with responsibility for attendance aware of issues arising and actions to improve attendance within their Key Stage.

### Students

- Arrive at school in good time for the start of the day and attend school regularly.
- Be prompt to registration and lessons and be prepared and ready to learn.
- Stay on site at break times and return in good time if you have permission to go home at lunchtimes.
- Follow school expectations if you are late or feel ill during the school day.
- Speak to a trusted adult if you are having difficulties which may prevent you from attending school regularly and/or on time.

### Parents/Carers

- Promote positive attitudes to regular school attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure their child(ren) leave home in good time to get to school and are fully prepared for the day.
- Ensure that any part time work your child may have (if 13 or over) does not affect their ability to attend school regularly and on time.
- Notify the school by 9am on the first day of their child's absence
- Contact the school by 1.30pm if their child goes home unwell at lunchtime.
- Contact the school again if their child is going to be off for 3 or more days due to illness.
- Avoid where possible medical/dental/ opticians appointments for their children during the school day (absence should be minimised where this is not possible and the child should be in school for the remainder of the day not taken up by the appointment). Where medical appointments do occur in the school day the school should be informed in advance with evidence of the appointment.
- Ensure their child follows school procedure if they feel unwell during the school day (they should see their Year Manager who will decide whether they should go home)
- Avoiding, unless in exceptional circumstances, holidays during term time. Where a holiday is planned permission must be sought in advance using the 'Leave of Absence (Holiday) Request Form'. Examples of 'exceptional circumstances' which are considered for approval are: holidays for families whose members are service personnel who are prevented from taking holiday other than term time, or time required for families to spend time together during or after a crisis, such as bereavement. For further information see the absence request form and the penalty notice information letter.

For answers to frequently asked questions see appendix.

NB the Headteacher, in consultation with the EAO, may grant up to a maximum of 10 days term time absence only in exceptional circumstances as outlined above. Parents who take their children out of school without permission could be subject to a penalty notice.

If your child is more than 10 minutes late in any week you will receive a letter home and your child will be expected to make up time in school. If your child is regularly late you will be invited into school to identify a plan of action to improve your child's punctuality.

Each half term you will receive a traffic light letter informing you of your child's level of attendance. Attendance of above 95% is good and you will receive a green letter and your child will be entered into a raffle. If however your child's attendance is below 95% you will receive a cause for concern letter and you may be invited into school to identify ways we can work together to improve their attendance. Attendance below 90% is considered to be a significant concern and you will be expected to work with the school and the education welfare officer in order to identify the reasons for absence and put in place a support structure to help improve your child's attendance. This level of absence is equivalent to having 1 day off a fortnight. Attendance of 80% or less is the same as one day off a week.

### **Fast Track Proceedings** (see appendix)

The school works closely with the Education Attendance Service (EAS) and will liaise with the assigned Education Welfare Officer in cases where attendance is giving cause for concern. Fast Track proceedings will

be initiated in cases where the EWO, in consultation with the Year Managers and the Assistant Head responsible for attendance, considers this to be the best course of action.

## Appendix 1

### Strategic Response to Improving Attendance

#### Traffic Light Letters

Sent to parents each half term.

- Green (>95%) students to be entered into a raffle each half term. These will be awarded in assemblies which celebrate good attendance each half term.
- Amber (90 to 95%) students will be monitored to ensure attendance does not fall below 90%
- Red (<90%) attendance will be the trigger level for level 1 interventions (see below) to start.

#### Attendance Leaflets (to attach as appendix)

- General leaflet for all parents on the benefits of good attendance
- Leaflet focussed on strategies for parents in improving your child's attendance to accompany letters home regarding attendance concerns.
- Warning Leaflet (EAS) to accompany Fast Track actions.

#### Levels of Response (Attendance)

Level 1: *School Intervention (<90%)*. Form Tutor to support. Letter home. In school meeting (consider alternate place if more appropriate to ensure parents can attend) to set up monitoring plan – could involve School Nurse (lots of illness/medical) or governor (if attendance related to social/emotional concerns etc) (position as someone to support – what would help you?). EWO could be invited if truancy suspected/ known. Six week monitoring period with meeting with parents at start and after six weeks.

Level 2: *Joint Intervention*. Form Tutor and/or Year Manager. Attendance fails to improve during period of significant intervention (level 1) and/or attendance falls below 85%. EWO involvement. Attendance 'hot file' with 2 weekly parent review meetings. EWO letter home. Similar possible support as Level 1 from Governor or school nurse. EWO attend in school meetings to monitor progress. Where appropriate a CAF should be considered.

Level 3: *EWO intervention*. Heads of School take lead role in school. No improvement in attendance at level 1 and level 2, significant unauthorised absence, attendance falls below 80%. Fast Track referral. As above a CAF should be considered.

#### Levels of Response (Punctuality)

Level 1: *School Intervention*. Significant lateness (> 10 minutes over a week). Letter home and detention set (by tutor/class teacher)

Level 2: *Joint Intervention*. Persistent offender. Regular lateness every week (4 or more late detentions in a half term, or lateness of >30 minutes or more on more than 2 occasions in a half term) – EWO letter and in school meeting. Action plan as Level 2 attendance. Consider individual or small group interventions with EWO/Connexions (include parents?)

Level 3: *Joint Intervention*. Persistent offender with significant lateness to lessons/ school daily (> 10 minutes a day). Move to attendance concern. Attendance hot file with regular review meetings involving parents and EWO. Attendance level 2 or 3 as appropriate.

At all levels it may also be appropriate to offer a referral to the Family Support Worker.

## **Appendix 2**

### *Further Guidance for Staff*

Students not in school by **9.15am** in the morning will be considered absent for the session. Students more than **45 minutes** late in the afternoon will be considered absent for this session.

Year Managers are the **only staff** who should enter **absence codes into SIMS**. Form Tutors who are given reason for absence may enter codes with the agreement of the Year Manager. The codes entered should be consistent with the list given in appendix 3. Code 'C' – authorised other should only be used in exceptional circumstances. If unsure, Year Managers should check its use with the Heads of School- Pastoral. Office staff receiving calls from parents should complete the blue absence forms but **NOT** change the absence code on SIMS.

SIMS registration will be reviewed at least once every half term by the Heads of School-Pastoral, the EWO and the Assistant Head with responsibility for attendance.

## **Appendix 3**

### *Guidance for Team Leaders*

Where there are identified areas of concern such as significant truancy of lessons Team Leaders should work with Year Managers and Heads of School to address the issues and monitor the impact of such actions.

### **Departmental Attendance Tracking Guidance**

#### **Rationale**

There is a clear link between engagement of young people and lesson and school attendance. The relationships we develop with the young people and their carers also impact on their commitment to education. As such we all have a responsibility to ensure that the experience of our students is a positive learning experience, allowing them to grow and develop through educational challenge within a nurturing and supportive structure. How we include their parents in the process is also important, and simple actions such as acknowledging progress and achievement through postcards and phone calls can have a positive effect on engagement. Where we make time for this and the planning and delivery of learning, attendance and behaviour are often more positive.

Recent changes to guidance on attendance, and in particular expectations from DCSF regarding schools whose level of persistent absence is high, include the requirement for team leaders to monitor attendance to their subject, including identifying any patterns of absence for individuals and groups of students (BME, SEN, gender etc), and implementing action plans where necessary to address any issues arising. In addition, our pastoral staff will continue to monitor year group and whole school patterns, as well as working with individuals whose overall attendance is a concern. However, they may also alert you to patterns that appear for individual students or groups for whom a pattern of absence is apparent. In each of these situations there is an expectation on the subject area to implement a plan of action to address the attendance concern.

Attendance can be tracked within SIMS Lesson Monitor where individual and group reports can be selected. Attached to this is a brief summary of how to produce these and what these reports look like. TMI can also provide further guidance and clarification where necessary.

#### **Monitoring Guidelines**

It is expected that most students will have an attendance of 95% or better. Individual student attendance to lessons of less than 80% is defined as persistent absence. Attendance is best tracked half-termly so that any patterns can be identified quickly and interventions put in place. Information will be given to team leaders to support the tracking of lesson attendance within their subject area.

If staff wish to track this information more regularly the following reports are available on SIMS.

- Team leaders can check registers are taken regularly and accurately by identifying the number of missing marks for a report.
- Year Managers will include appropriate Team Leader in emails regarding missing registers or missing marks.
- A 'Group Weekly Analysis' report can be accessed via lesson monitor each half term for each class taught in the department.
- High levels of absence from a class can be investigated further using the student breakdown report.
  - Year Managers can offer guidance on whether attendance issues are general or specific and should be consulted if you are unsure.
- Using the data supplied look for patterns of absence for individuals/ groups.
  - Are there particular students who are regularly absent? If so, why?
  - Are there particular groups who are missing lessons?
    - Girls, boys, friendship group, BME etc
  - If the same class has more than one teacher, is there a difference in attendance patterns as above between the teachers? If so, why?
  - Are there particular classes, teachers etc where absence levels are high?
- Interventions need to be identified where appropriate and the impact monitored over the next half term and ongoing. This may include working alongside the pastoral staff. Planned interventions to be discussed with SLT link.

## How to Access Lesson Monitor Reports

### Group Weekly Analysis

- Open SIMS
- Lesson Monitor
  - Group report
  - Group weekly analysis report
- Select Classes for report (academic classes)
- Change date range needed
- Ensure report type is lesson attendance
- Print produces a report for each group selected on the screen (in Internet Explorer)
- This data can be imported into excel if necessary (cut and paste!)

### Selected Group Lesson Attendance Report

- Open SIMS
- Lesson Monitor
  - Selected Students
  - % attendance
- Select Classes for report (academic classes)
- Change date range needed
- Ensure report type is lesson attendance
- Print produces a report for each group selected on the screen (in Internet Explorer)
- This data can be imported into excel if necessary (cut and paste!)

*Appendix 4*

**Approved codes for use in denoting absence and presence**

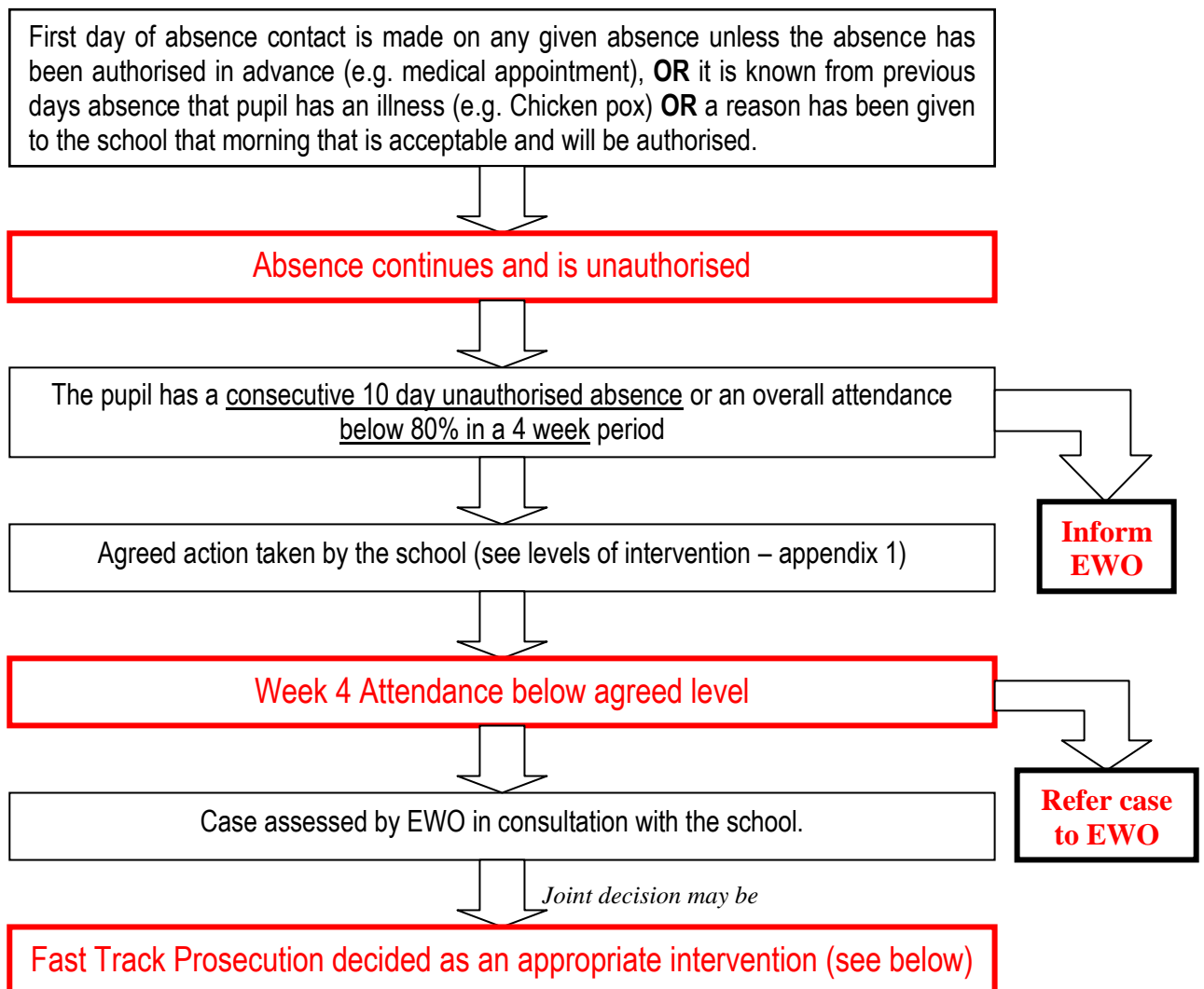
## Appendix 5 Fast Track Process

The school operates under the policy of Fast track management, in order to try to further improve the attendance rates at the school.

In order implement this policy, the following procedures must be in place:

- A system of 'First Day Contact' over absence, with information recorded.
- An agreed and identified system and delegated duty of "authorising" and "unauthorising" absences
- Parents all aware of the system in place through a letter sent to all parents
- An Education Welfare Officer allocated to the school
- The school in agreement to working in partnership with the EWS in dealing with attendance issues
- Registration has a close time and there is a system of recording late arrival.

### Fast Track Flow Chart



### Fast Track Prosecution decided as an appropriate intervention:

- Action put in place by EWS assigning tasks and engaging appropriate agencies
- 1<sup>st</sup> warning letter sent with an appointment for a meeting
- Meeting in school with agreement made between school, pupil and parent
- Review date set for 6 school weeks
- Review meeting considers how effective the plan has been. All involved in Action Plan to be present
- Final warning letter sent and Court date booked.

**Appendix 6**  
**Absence request form**

**Appendix 7**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

**1 When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school in good time for period 1 which begins at 8.30am. They can attend breakfast club at 8am but otherwise should not be in school until 8.15am.

**2 What happens if my child is late?**

Registers are taken in all lessons.

Morning Registration

If your child arrives late to period 1 (after 8.30am but before 9.30am) they will be marked late and will be expected to make up the time. If however, your child arrives after 9.30am they will be marked as absent for the morning session. This will be recorded as an *unauthorised absence*.

Afternoon Registration

Period 3 (afternoon lesson) begins at 1.05pm. The afternoon registration will be taken in this lesson. If your child arrives after this time they will be recorded as late. If however, your child arrives after 1.50pm they will be recorded as absent for the afternoon session. This will be an *unauthorised absence*.

Students are expected to make up the time missed due to lateness after school. Where students are regularly late, parents will be expected to work with the school on strategies to improve their child's attendance and/or punctuality. The EWO will be informed.

**3 Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

If your child is absent we ask you to phone the school to inform us of the reason for the absence by 9.00 am. You can also inform your child's year manager or send a note in via a sibling. Messages can also be left on the answer phone. Whatever happens, we need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence. If your child has 10 or more unauthorised sessions (1 day = 2 sessions) you may receive a penalty notice and have to pay a fine.

**4 What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

- Illness
- Emergency dental/medical appointment  
(Please make routine appointments after school or during the Holidays)
- Day of religious observance for the religion to which the family belong
- Family bereavement
- Family holiday (under exceptional circumstances and only when prior approval has been given – see appendix 6)
- Extended family visits abroad (under exceptional circumstances and only when prior approval has been given – see appendix 6)

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

**5 What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc. Similarly we cannot accept taking siblings to school as a reason for persistent lateness.

**6 Will the school contact me if my child is absent?**

First day absence calls will be made by your child's Year Manager to ascertain why your child is not at school if we have not heard from you by 9.30am. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we may contact you to discuss the best way forward.

## **7 Can we take family holidays during term-time?**

Family holidays should, wherever possible, be taken during school holidays. If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time, you should complete an Absence Request Form (appendix 6, attached) **at least three weeks** in advance, stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission having given consideration to:

- your child's age
- the time of year
- overall attendance pattern of your child

The Headteacher will not authorise your child's absence if the timing of the holiday coincides with external exams (e.g. GCSE modules).

## **8 I am thinking about sending my child on an extended trip overseas to visit relatives. What should I do?**

The school recognises that such trips are important and help children keep in touch with their extended family. In this case, write a letter to the school outlining the reasons for the trip and complete an Absence Request Form (appendix 6, attached).

You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence.

## **9 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

## **10 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Contact your child's tutor or Year Manager in the first place. If this does not resolve the problem you may wish to make an appointment to see the Pastoral Head of School or Assistant Head.

Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise. The Education Attendance Service is based at:

Southern Area Education Office  
St Edmunds House  
Rope Walk  
Ipswich IP4 1LZ                      Tel: 01473 583000

The school also has a family support worker who you may find it useful to speak to. She can help you support your child and work with the school to identify issues that may be causing concern.

**Appendix 8**  
**Attendance Leaflets**