



Chislehurst School for Girls

Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2026-2027

Policy name	Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2026-2027
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Other staff contribution	Ms K Cottey, Student Services Manager/Attendance & Inclusion
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Attendance and Punctuality Policy & Procedures 2026-2027

Statement of Principle

At Chislehurst School we believe that attendance and punctuality is vital to the well-being, and future prospects, of all our students. Attendance and punctuality are intrinsically linked to raising achievement. This policy provides the framework within which all staff, parents/carers, students and external agencies can contribute to the development and maintenance of a learning environment where high attendance and excellent punctuality is the 'norm'.

Aims

- To maintain and improve the School's overall attendance figures, reduce unauthorised absence, persistent absence (under 90%), severe absence (under 50%) and working in collaboration with families and outside agencies, to overcome the barriers to being in school, particularly for key groups, e.g. SEND, Pupil Premium and Inclusion Priority students(*Working together to improve school attendance, DfE August 2024, updated July 2026*).
- To maintain a clear system to promote excellent attendance and punctuality, clearly communicated to all School staff, students and parents/carers who are all working to agreed routines and standards.
- To develop a learning environment for the school where students are encouraged to attend regularly and to be punctual because they feel valued members of the school community, and that they feel safe and secure.
- To put in place an effective and efficient administrative system for monitoring and intervening with issues relating to attendance and punctuality
- To offer students and parents/carers a high standard of support, advice and guidance on the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality.

Objectives

For Students

- To ensure that they maximise their learning potential by taking responsibility for achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

For Parents/Carers

- To be fully supportive of the school with regard to attendance and punctuality.
- To support the school and their child(ren) by not requesting leave of absence for holidays during term time (which will not be authorised), and minimising where possible, all other authorised absence i.e. dental appointments.
during the school day.
- To follow the School's procedures for dealing with attendance through making contact with the School on the first day, and each subsequent day, of absence.

For Teachers/Form Tutors

- To act as role-models by being punctual to every lesson/registration
- To take the register promptly at the beginning of every lesson/registration period
- To ensure registers on SIMS are accurate in terms of any students withdrawn for other activities e.g. intervention, rehearsals.
- To monitor attendance statistics and raise concerns regarding suspected truancy in liaison with the Attendance Office and Guidance Team
- To take responsibility for dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality in relation to their Tutor Group e.g. liaising with the Pastoral Support Officer, Head of Year, Director of Studies and Attendance Lead.
- To raise the profile of excellent attendance and punctuality using the Attendance Tracker through the weekly attendance focus as part of the whole-school Tutorial Programme, use of rewards, contact with home and encouraging students to monitor their own attendance.
- To assist in reintegrating any of their tutees after a period of prolonged absence.

For Heads of Years & Directors of Studies

- To raise the profile of excellent attendance through assemblies, briefings and the weekly Tutorial Programme and to monitor the attendance of students in their Year groups, identifying any patterns of groups or individual concerns.

- To be responsible for regular liaison with the School's Attendance Team regarding the attendance concerns and issues related to poor punctuality.
- To liaise with parents/carers in response to attendance, punctuality and truancy issues, and attend meetings as appropriate, making accurate records and ensuring agreed actions are in place.
- To ensure that teachers and tutors fulfil their duties regarding attendance and punctuality and to take appropriate action when this does not occur.
- To ensure that the school's Reward System in relation to attendance and punctuality is used effectively within their year groups.
- To co-ordinate the provision of appropriate work for students with an extended period of authorised absence, in liaison with the Attendance Office: *please note, work is only provided where there is authorised absence.*

For Administrative Staff/ Attendance & Inclusion Officer /Attendance Support Assistants (Attendance Team)

- To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the school computerised registration systems for attendance and punctuality i.e. processing registers, preparing and distributing attendance data.
- To establish reasons for absence, to include telephone calls to parents/carers on the first day of absence, text messages, letters and home visits where necessary.
- To monitor lesson registers throughout the school day.
- To lead/assist in following-up poor attendance and punctuality i.e. organising attendance meetings with parents/carers and external agencies, making home visits, ensuring that student targets are agreed and monitored.
- To liaise with the Local Authority/Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and make referrals where there is a serious cause for concern e.g. Child Missing in Education (CME).
- To monitor attendance of students on the Child Protection Register and other vulnerable students and alert the Safeguarding Team and Guidance Team of concerns.
- To make daily/weekly attendance checks on any students in Alternative Provision and to update the school's register accordingly.

For the School Leadership Team

- To co-ordinate and monitor the policy and procedures for attendance and punctuality throughout the school.
- To support the work of the Attendance and Guidance Teams to raise the profile and importance of attendance and punctuality i.e. through the assembly programme and the reward systems that are put in place.
- To provide accurate data on attendance for Census and Governors.
- To monitor whole-school trends in attendance and punctuality data and identify any patterns in terms of specific groups or individuals e.g., Pupil Premium, SEND.
- To ensure that the learning environment on offer to students creates the foundations for excellent attendance and punctuality e.g. through the curriculum, personalised adaptations, behaviour expectations and reintegration procedures.
- To ensure that School expectations on attendance and punctuality are communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

For Governors:

- To annually review and agree the Attendance and Punctuality policy.
- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual students or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.

Absence

Under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their child(ren) attends the school on a regular, and full-time, basis. Every half-day's absence is classified by the school as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. The school must record the reason for any half-day absence.

Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes keeping students away from school unnecessarily, truancy and absences which the school considers have not been properly explained. This type of absence can lead to a referral to the Local Authority and possible sanctions or legal proceedings.

Authorised Absence

Under normal circumstances, the only reason a student should miss any lessons is if they are too ill to attend. This is an example of an **authorised absence** i.e. students have missed a morning or afternoon session for a valid reason.

Leave of Absence

The school does not authorise holidays taken during term time. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, introduced on 1st September 2013, state that **“Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.”** If the leave is granted due to exceptional circumstances, “Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school.”

In the case of **exceptional circumstances** e.g. family bereavement, the application for leave of absence should be made to the school’s Attendance & Inclusion Officer in the first instance. Each request will be considered, taking into account the following:

- the nature of the request, and whether any other requests have been made.
- the student’s previous attendance history.
- the time of year, regarding any public or internal examinations.
- Attendance and punctuality in the current academic year.

Parents/Carers will be advised of the final decision. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued from the Local Authority should leave of absence be taken without permission, or if leave is taken beyond the dates agreed. These are currently set at £160 per child per parent with a reduced penalty of £80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days. Non-payment of Fixed Penalty Notice fine may result in court action.

Procedures for Reporting Absence

Attendance contact details: attendance@chsfg.lumero.org or 0208-300-1061 for the dedicated absence reporting line.

Parents/Carers must leave a message before 8.45 am on the school's absence line for the Attendance Team on each day of their child's absence and follow up with medical evidence *if requested* in order to authorise the absence. If parents do not make the required contact, the attendance team will follow up with contact via text/email/telephone call as appropriate. Should the reason for absence still remain unknown, the School's Attendance Team will make the necessary further enquiries to ascertain reasons for absence. This may include contacting other emergency telephone numbers held on record, arranging for a home visit to be made or where there is an on-going concern, a referral to the Local Authority. If there is a serious safeguarding concern, the school will liaise with social services and may contact the police to complete a welfare check if appropriate.

Parents/carers must provide at least two further emergency contacts for the school's records: where these are not provided, the school will make its best endeavours to secure additional contacts.

Where a student has unauthorised absence for 20 consecutive days and the school have been unable to ascertain the student's whereabouts through working with the local authorities, the school reserves the right to remove the student from the school's roll. This will be done in conjunction with the Local Authority, following Child Missing in Education procedures (CME).

If a student is unable to attend for a length of time e.g. 3 consecutive days or more, the school will endeavour to secure medical evidence explaining the reason for their absence. This can be in the form of a medical appointment card, a copy of a prescription or a medication box. A doctor's certificate or letter from another medical professional may be sought if absence is prolonged e.g. over a week or more.

If a student's attendance drops below 90% (classed as **persistent absence**), medical evidence may be requested each time a student is absent from school. If this is not provided, the student's absence will remain unauthorised and follow-up procedures will be put in place e.g. telephone call, meeting with parent, home visit, referral to Local Authority as appropriate. If a student's attendance drops below 50%, this is classed as **severe absence**.

If a parent knows their child will be absent for an extended period of time e.g. for an operation, then their absence may be authorised for a longer period of time once evidence has been provided. The school requests regular updates from the parent to advise of their child's progress and planned return date. If a student is well enough to complete schoolwork through their absence, the Head of Year will arrange for work to be sent home which should be completed and returned to the school.

Medical appointments should, wherever possible, be made outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents should get the school's agreement in advance, ideally at least giving 24 hours' notice. The student should only be out of school for a minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment e.g. they should still attend for part of the school day. Evidence of the appointment must be provided to the Attendance Office.

Penalty Notices and Prosecution for Non-Attendance

When avenues of supportive intervention, e.g. telephone calls, meetings with parents/carers, home visits and outside agencies have been used and there has been no improvement in attendance, the school will use the legal avenues available. This may involve the use of the following:

- **Students with less than 95% attendance:** students who have 94% attendance or below may receive a warning letter from the school. This letter will state the student's overall attendance percentage and that if there is no improvement in attendance, normally within the subsequent three-week period, then further action may need to be taken.
- **Leave of Absence:** as previously stated, the school does not grant leave of absence in term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a request is made for a leave of absence and this is not approved and the student does not attend during the stated period, then a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued upon the student's return.
- **Prosecution, Fines and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN):** parents are responsible for ensuring the full attendance of their child(ren). If a student's attendance remains a serious concern, despite support and intervention, the school may refer the case to the Local Authority. This could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or court action.
- **Fixed Penalty Notices for Punctuality:** parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school on time. Students who are late after the close of the register will receive an unauthorised late mark

which will reduce their percentage attendance and could lead to parents receiving a FPN if their child's overall attendance is poor.

As of August 2024 (*"Working together to improve school attendance" updated July 2026 DfE*), if a student accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent to 5 full school days) within a rolling 10-week period, parents/carers could receive a Fixed Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service. This absence includes late marks after the register closes, holidays taken during term time and any other unauthorised absence.

Procedures for Registration & Punctuality

Registration

The school day starts at 8.45 am for the whole school. All students should be in their form room for registration by 8.40 am, ready for a prompt start at 8.45 am. Registers are taken electronically but if this is temporarily unavailable, paper registers can be used by the form teacher and delivered to the Attendance Office by 9.15 am when the register closes. Lessons begin at 9.15 am each day.

Punctuality

Students who arrive late will be greeted and signed in late at the school gate from 8.45 am to 9.15 am. The school register closes at 9.15 am. Any student signing in after this time will enter through the main school entrance. Students with no reason provided for their lateness by their parent/carer will receive an unauthorised late mark which will reduce their percentage attendance. Students with two or more late marks in a week will receive an after-school detention.

The Attendance Office will contact the parents/carers of the children who arrive late without reason, informing them that their child has arrived to school late and asking for them to call the Attendance Team to discuss the matter.

Where there are persistent concerns regarding punctuality, these will be referred to the Head of Year and/or the Director of Studies for follow up, which may include arranging a meeting with parents and/or placing the student on attendance and punctuality mentoring or report. Please see above for further information on Fixed Penalty Notices, which include absence due to lateness after close of the register.

Subject Registration, Punctuality & Truancy

It is essential that an electronic subject register is taken at the start of every lesson. This will ensure that the school is able to monitor any suspected truancy from lessons which is then investigated, and the truancy log updated. If it is found that a student has been truanting, then this will be formally recorded as an unauthorised absence and followed up by the Head of Year/Director of Studies and relevant sanctions issued (see the School's Behaviour Policy).

Staff are responsible for updating SIMS or advising the Attendance Office if individual or small numbers of students are withdrawn from lessons and advising the Attendance Office in advance of absences of larger groups e.g. school trips, rehearsals etc.

Lateness to lessons must be challenged and recorded on the SIMS register. Subject teachers must take appropriate action when students are late without a valid reason e.g., issue a faculty detention. Students who are late for a genuine reason, must have a signed note from a member of staff or have the staff member's "out of lesson pass" or a late slip from the Attendance Office or Pastoral Support Officer. Teachers must ensure that they enter a timed 'L' into the electronic register should the student be late, so that SIMS records are accurate.

Illness During the School Day

Students who become unwell during the school day will be looked after in the school's medical room until a parent/carer/other relative is able to collect them in person. This is to ensure student safety and wellbeing. If there are circumstances that mean a student cannot be collected, arrangements will be made by Student Services in conjunction with the parent/carer giving full consideration of any safeguarding risks that may arise.

Strategies for Ensuring High Attendance and Excellent Punctuality

Rewards & Incentives

The Guidance Team have overall responsibility for publicly encouraging and rewarding excellent attendance and punctuality. This will be achieved through briefings, assemblies and encouraging a competitive spirit between forms. Informal praise and formal awards should both be used, and supported, by all School staff. This will comprise:

- Recognition for 100% attendance, issued termly by Director of Studies and celebrated through assemblies.
- Recognition for excellent/good attendance (95%+) e.g. prize draws, reward trips
- Recognition for 100% punctuality, issued termly by Director of Studies
- Recognition of improved attendance.

Support for attendance:

- Work sent home for extended authorised absence.
- Personalised re-integration support after extended absence e.g. for medical reasons.
- Attendance monitoring and rewards.
- Attendance/Punctuality reports to tutors/Guidance Team.
- Liaison/referrals to Local Authority (Education Welfare Service).
- Support from the Attendance, Guidance, Safeguarding and SEND Teams as appropriate.
- 1:1 meetings with parents.
- Allocation of a “go-to” member of staff.
- Support from Guidance Team to resolve friendship/peer difficulties that can be linked to poor attendance e.g. mediation and Restorative Justice techniques.
- Use of “Time Out” cards, medical toilet passes etc.

Severe Absence

In line with “*Working together to improve school attendance*” (DfE August 2024, updated July 2026), students with attendance below 50% are now classed as in severe absence. Such students may be finding it difficult to be in school or face more serious barriers to their regular attendance, and therefore need a more personalised and intensive approach. This includes students who are absent due to difficulties with mental health, termed as “Emotionally Based School Avoidance” (EBSA). Where needed, the school will work with the relevant external agencies in a multi-agency approach, prioritising the needs of students who are classed as severely absent. Where there is evidence to support a student’s difficulties leading to severe absence e.g. a letter from CAMHS or other medical professional stating they are not able to attend school, the school can present the case to the Local Authority’s Gateway Panel (Bromley) or equivalent

in other local boroughs. The Local Authority may agree to put support in place if the student meets the threshold.

Attendance support strategies for severe absence

A personalised approach will be offered to meet the individual needs of each student and their own context. The plan will be designed in conjunction with the family, young person and external agencies where required.

Examples of possible strategies are outlined below:

- Personalised, graduated reintegration timetable to allow a staged return (part-time timetables*).
- Re-orientation visits offered outside of school hours to allow students to re-familiarise themselves with the school environment, to reduce anxiety.
- Home visits by school staff where appropriate.
- Welfare checks with Educational Welfare Service, Social Services or police if there are concerns about a young person's welfare.
- Referral to in-school counselling services (if a young person will attend school to access this provision) or signposting to external support agencies if appropriate.
- Referrals to external agencies e.g. Social Care, Bromley Childrens Project, CAMHS, community paediatrics (for investigation related to SEND).
- Referrals to Gateway Panel (or equivalent in other boroughs) to secure alternative provision if supported by evidence from external agencies e.g. medical professional.
- Request for statutory assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan where there is evidence to support this request.

***Part-time Timetables**

In exceptional circumstances, a temporary part-time timetable may be put in place, authorised only by the Headteacher e.g. for a medical condition. Such arrangements must be made with both school and home in agreement and communicated in writing with timings and review dates indicated. Any part-time timetables should be in place for the shortest time necessary (*"Working together to improve school attendance"*, DfE, July2026) Where a student has an EHCP or a social worker, the relevant external agencies must be informed of these temporary arrangements.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

- Weekly/fortnightly line-management meetings with Assistant Headteacher and Attendance & Inclusion Officer
- Termly report to Governors
- Annual review of policy and practice.

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes, Descriptions & Meanings

For use with the a.m. and p.m. roll call

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole school
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole school
@	Do not use	Unauthorised Absence LATE FOR SESSIONS	
B	Educated off-site	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
C	Leave of absence e.g. bereavement.	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
D	Dual Registration	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for the whole session

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments etc.)	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised absence.	Out for the whole session
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority e.g. Medical or EHCP.	Approved Educational Activity.	Out for the whole session.
L	Late	Present	Late for Session
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for the whole session
O	Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for the whole session
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
Q	Transport that L.A. have a legal duty to provide but hasn't been put in place and child can't get to school	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session.
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
S	Study Leave	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
T	Traveller Absence. Parent travelling for occupational purposes. Child has no fixed	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
	abode; parent's trade needs to move from place to place. Child should register at local school where parent is working.		
U	Late After Registers Closed	Unauthorised Absence	Late for Session
V	Educational Visit or Trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
W	Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for the whole session
X	Not required. To be used for non-compulsory school age, e.g. 6 th form if school say they are not required in school.	Attendance Not Required	Out for the whole session
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided e.g. L.A.	Not counted in possible attendance.	Out for the whole session
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel. E.g. transport strikes, airline disruption, stuck abroad.	Not counted in possible attendance.	Out for the whole session
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Not counted in possible attendance.	Out for the whole session
Y4	Unable to attend due to the school site being unexpectedly closed e.g. bad weather.	Not counted in possible attendance.	Out for the whole session
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendance.	Out for the whole session

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Not counted in possible attendance.	Out for the whole session
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause this code is very rarely used.	Not counted in possible attendance.	Out for whole sessions
Z	Do NOT use	Authorised Absence	Out for the whole session
!	DfE X: Non-compulsory School Age Absence	Attendance Not Required	Out for the whole session
#	School Closed to Students and Staff	Attendance Not Required	Out for the whole session
*	DfE Z: Student Not On-roll	Attendance Not Required	Out for the whole session
-	All Should Attend/No Mark Recorded	No Mark	No Mark for Session