The Clere School

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy Issue: April 2023	
Approved at Whole Governing Body on: April 2023	
Due for Review: April 2024	
Statutory/Discretionary: Statutory	
Policy Responsible: Deputy Headteacher	

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regard to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

1. Legislation and guidance

1.1 This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- Attendance data will be monitored by the Education Committee, a member of which will be the designated governor for Attendance.

2.2   The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance
- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

2.3   The Designated Senior Leader is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance
- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Rebecca Vaughan (Acting Assistant Headteacher) who can be contacted via 01635 278372 or admin@clere.school

2.4 The Pastoral Team, including Pastoral Support Workers (PSW) Attendance Officer (AO - to be appointed); Key Stage Leaders (KSL) / Heads of Year (HoY) and Admin Attendance Support Staff (AA) are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance (all)
- Receiving information from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system (AA / AO)
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7) (AO/KSL/HoY)
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher (AO)
- Working with Local Authority representatives to tackle persistent absence (AO/HoY/KSL/PSW)
- Arranging and delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families, including calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues (all)
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices (AO)

These members of staff can be contacted via the methods outlined above.

2.5 Tutors and class teachers

Promoting the importance of school attendance and punctuality with their pupils.

Tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information via the school system. Tutors and class teachers should take the register at the start of each session/lesson.

2.6 School admin/office staff including the Admin Attendance Support member of staff will:
- Receive information from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to other pastoral staff, when necessary, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

2.7   Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time

- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 8.30 am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- Discuss with the Head of Year / Key Stage Leader any planned absences well in advance

- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year

- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

2.8   Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence

- Arrive at school on time

- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time

- Take responsibility for registering at the Reception Desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours

3.   Recording attendance

3.1   Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. Registers are also taken by class teachers at the start of each lesson. The register will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

  The name of the person who made the amendment. (Their position can be obtained from the school office).

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35 am on each school day in order to be ready for 'line-up' and to be in tutor time for 8.40am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40 am and will be kept open until 9.10 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.10pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

3.2   Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by contacting the school (see also section 7).

Parents/carers may contact the school via the school absence phone line or via abence@clere.school.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3.3   Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers should request leaves of absence by completing the 'Request to authorise absence from school due to exceptional circumstances' form which can be found on the school website. Once completed, this should be sent to the Headteacher, Mr R. Milner.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

3.4   Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Where pupils are late to school in the morning, or late to lessons during the school day, this information is recorded and captured on the school system and via the Duty Lead process. Lateness is responded to on a case-by-case basis. These responses may include:

- Meeting with the pupil
- Placing of the pupil on Punctuality Report
- Phone call to parent/carer
- Meeting with the parent/carer
- Letter to the parent/carer
- Sanction for pupil e.g. After-school Late Detention
- Involvement of external agency if persistent and necessary

If parents/carers feel that there is a legitimate reason for a pupil's late arrival to school in the morning, or during the school day, they should contact the school via the school absence phone line or via absence@clere.school in order to provide us with the relevant information, as soon as possible, on the day in question.

3.5   Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make a home visit or involve an external agency such as the police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the local authority or other external agency
- Unexplained absence may also become apparent during the school day. When a pupil unexpectedly fails to attend a lesson, the teacher will notify the school office and Duty Lead. There will be a check of possible explanations (Medical, Year offices, The Bridge etc) before contacting parents/carers to alert them of possible truancy. The timings of this check and of contacting parents/carers will depend on specific circumstances, with a balance to be struck between unjustified distress to parents/carers and the risks to the pupil

3.6   Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.
This is done via each child's school reports, and additional attendance letters (where necessary).

4.   Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1   Approval for a term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. The fundamental principles for defining

'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2   Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence (including persistent lateness) of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fixed penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where a suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Further information about Attendance Prosecution (as opposed to fixed penalty notices) can be found via the Department for Education publication, working together to improve school attendance

5.   Strategies for promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child. The Home/School Agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletters and via the school website

- Report to parents on how their children are performing at school, what their attendance and punctuality rates are and how this relates to their attainment

- Celebrate good attendance by presenting certificates / sending letters home for individual achievement

- Set targets for the school and for year groups for attendance

- Hold meetings with parents, pupils and staff to work together on raising attendance levels individually and across the school

- Communicate directly with families, where attendance is below 90%

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing body.

6.2 Analysing attendance The

school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to pastoral staff and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Initiate appropriate interventions (letters, phone calls, regular meetings etc.) with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

- Initiate legal interventions where this is appropriate. These include the following:
    Parenting contracts

Education supervision orders

Attendance prosecution Parenting

orders

Fixed penalty notices

For further information, please see the Department for Education publication, <u>working together</u> <u>to improve</u> <u>school attendance</u>

7. Monitoring arrangements

7.1 This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the designated senior leader responsible for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
	Authorised absence	
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
	Unauthorised absence	

G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day