The Clere School

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy Issue:	**June 2024**
Approved at Full Governing Body on:	**26 June 2024**
Date of Review:	**June 2025**
Statutory/Discretionary:	**Statutory**
Policy Responsible:	**Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)**

Contents

1. Aims

    We are committed to meeting our obligation with regard to school attendance including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

    *   Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
    *   Promoting good attendance and the benefits of 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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
*   The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
*   It also refers to:
*   School census guidance
*   Keeping Children Safe in Education
*   Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 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.

3.2 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

3.3 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 (Assistant Headteacher) who can be contacted via 01635 278372 or attendance@clere.school

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher/deputyheadteacher (authorised by the headteacher in their absence only) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officer is Alison Dixon [insert name] and can be contacted via [01635 278372 or attendance@clere.school

3.5 The Pastoral Team, including Pastoral Support Workers (PSW); Key Stage Leaders (KSL) / Heads of Year (HoY) and Admin Attendance Support Staff (AA) are responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance (all)
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7) (AO/KSL/HoY)

- 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)

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

3.6   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.
- Tutors should make 2nd day absence welfare calls for all tutees who are not in school and log on CPOMS

3.7   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.
- Log all students who sign in on INventry in a timely fashion to ensure SIMS is up to date.

3.8   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 3 or more 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
- Keep to any Attendance focused Pastoral Support plan in place
- 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
- Seek and accept support, where necessary for maintain good attendance, by working with the school and outside agencies where necessary.

3.9   Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every day
- 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

4. Recording attendance

4.1   Attendance register

We will keep an electronic 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 6 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 tutor time at 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 11.50am and will be kept open until 12.20pm.

4.2   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.

Parents/carers should contact the school via the school absence email absence@clere.school or if this is not possible the absence phone line.

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.

4.3   Planned absence

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

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. In most cases medical and dental appointments should not take the whole school day.

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. A request for authorised absence is a request and not a guaranteed approval.

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.

4.4   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.

4.5   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 and children's services.

- 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, after this is will automatically be unauthorised and can't be changed.

- 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 and carry out an unscheduled home visit.

- 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

- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: we will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention for both external and internal unexplained absence.

4.6   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).

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1   Approval for term time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Situations that are very unusual, unexpected or unavoidable, and that could not be reasonably foreseen or resolved.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 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.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

5.2.1 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

5.2.2 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child. We will work with parents and have 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 95%

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1   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.

7.2 Analysing Attendance Data

- 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

7.3   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

7.4   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, working together to improve school attendance

8.   Monitoring arrangements

8.1   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.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

currently unconfirmed awaiting Hampshire decision on which DfE codes will be used in Hampshire

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied

		that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays