

# **CHURWELL PRIMARY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY**



**Resilience  
Multi Academy  
Trust**

<b>Summary</b>	The Attendance Policy is to support all stakeholders through the procedures of attendance at Churwell Primary Academy.
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<b>Applies to:</b> (please circle/delete as appropriate)	<b>Staff</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Student</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Community</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ratifying Committee</b>	Standards Committee
<b>Version:</b>	1
<b>Available On:</b>	Website, SharePoint or on demand
<b>Effective from:</b>	29 September 2025
<b>Date of Next Formal Review:</b>	July 2026
<b>Review Period</b>	Annual
<b>Status</b>	Statutory
<b>Owner</b>	RMAT

#### Document Control

Date	Version	Action	Amendments
24.09.2025	<b>1</b>	New Policy Created	n/a

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## What to do as a Parent or Carer if your child is unable to attend school

1. Please see the guidance in Appendix 3 for details of how to report a student absence.

### Introduction

2. RMAT is a successful educational trust, and all our students play their part in making it so. We are committed to providing a quality education for all our students. Regular attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential.
3. RMAT believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident, and competent young adults who can realise their full potential.
4. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the academy is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We positively encourage children to attend and use appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our academy a happy and rewarding experience for all children.
5. All staff should be aware that children going missing repeatedly, or children missing education (CME), can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their academy's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.
6. The Local Review Board are responsible for making sure the academy keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the academy day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
7. Churwell values all children, and we will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
8. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all the aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on Safeguarding, Bullying, Behaviour and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities ("SEND").

### Aims of this Policy

9. Our Attendance Policy aims to support excellent levels of attendance to enable fulfilment of every child's potential.
10. This policy has been prepared regarding RMAT's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance entitled ***Working together to improve school attendance*** (2024) which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance guidance".

## Definitions

11. Authorised Absence
  - An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the academy has received notification from a Parent or Carer. For example, if a child is unwell, the Parent or Carer, must telephone the academy or send a message via ParentMail, to explain the absence. Parents or Carers **MUST NOT** send an email to the academy office.
  - Only the academy can make an absence authorised. Parents and Carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by Parents and Carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
12. Unauthorised Absence
  - An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the academy and a Parent or Carer.
  - Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a Parent or Carer.

## If a child is absent or late

13. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. A member of the Attendance Team will contact a Parent or Carer on the first day of absence.
14. A Parent or Carer needs to ring the academy or report on ParentMail, before 9.30am to explain the reason for absence, for example if they are unwell, Parents or Carers needs to state the nature of the illness. **An email will not be accepted to inform us of an absence.** If contact has not been made with the academy this will result in a member of the Attendance Team contacting the Parent or Carer by phone initially, and a home visit may also be made. If no reason for the absence has been given, then the absence is marked as unauthorised. A home visit can be made even if Parents/Carers have contacted the academy.
15. In cases where the academy needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parent/carer may be asked to provide the Academy with medical evidence. If your child is absent from school for 5 days or longer, please provide medical evidence, i.e. an appointment card/text, copy of any prescription or photograph of recent medication prescribed. In both cases, the reason for absence should be indicated. If satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.
16. Absences immediately preceding or following an official school holiday will not be authorised, unless supported by appropriate medical evidence, such as a medical appointment confirmation (e.g. letter, email or text), a copy of a prescription, or a photograph of recently prescribed medication.
17. The use of ParentMail or a telephone call can be made to the academy prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment. Proof of appointments will be asked for to allow this to be coded correctly on the register. Medical, dental, and other essential appointments for a child should take place outside of school hours where this is possible.

18. Registers will close at 8.55am – children who arrive after this time will be given the code L (late). Children who arrive after 9.30am will be given the code U (unauthorised).

### Requests for leave of absence

19. Children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. Request for leave may only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and a holiday would not be considered exceptional. Request for leave of absence must be made to the academy in advance as the DfE have informed schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken. Parents will receive a penalty notice. **Please see Appendix 1 for an overview of the Government Penalty Notice Guidelines.**
20. Due to Government legislation the Academy is no longer able to authorise any holiday during term time. This absence will therefore be recorded as unauthorised absence on your child's attendance record.
21. Parents/carers should make every effort to avoid taking students out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time.
22. To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance by completing a leave of absence request form and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
23. In respect of requests for leaves of absence for taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad, parents should be aware that any absence which is authorised **will** affect a student's overall attendance percentage.
24. Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Principal will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
- will be confirmed in writing
  - is solely at the Principal's discretion and
  - is final.
25. Where permission is granted, the Principal will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
26. If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the Academy, the absence will be marked as unauthorised, and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
27. We recognise that students of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:
- falls during school time and
  - has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs,

the absence from the Academy will be authorised.

28. We ask that parents/carers notify the Academy by writing to the Principal in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

### **Long-term absence**

29. If there is a long-term absence the academy may make arrangements for the child to be given some work which can be completed at home. This depends on the circumstance of the absence.

### **Repeated unauthorised absences**

30. The academy will contact the Parent or Carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. Please see Appendix 1 for an overview of the Government Penalty Notice Guidelines. We also work hard to support families and engage in a positive conversation to support children to attend school.
31. The Attendance Team, supported by Resilience Multi Academy Trust and the Local Authority will take action against any Parents or Carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.
32. Progression to the next stage of Attendance Support and Intervention is governed by the relevant Local Authority's Code of Conduct. Your Academy Attendance & Welfare Officers will consult with you to provide guidance on the specific processes and requirements outlined by your Local Authority.

### **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

33. If we do not have communication from a Parent/Carer about their child's absence then the Attendance Team will seek to make contact via telephone or by making a home visit. The Attendance Team will monitor this and try to make communication with the Parent/Carer to establish where the child is.
34. The Local Authority guidance states that schools will make a referral to the CME team if:  
A child has been missing from school for 4 weeks in the following circumstances:
  - A child has left the country regardless if a new address and/or new school information has been provided
  - There is reasonable evidence to indicate a child has moved out of the Leeds local authority area and their whereabouts are unknown
  - Where a child is reported or believed to have moved to a different Local Authority area but is not confirmed to be on a school roll in the new area
  - Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 4 weeks, and reasonable enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of a child, and the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

### Rewards for good attendance

35. Attendance awards are given weekly to classes with the highest attendance record in each key stage along with individual half termly badges for 100% attendance. There is an award for 100% attendance over the full year. Class attendance winners are rewarded with extra playtime. There is also an 'I shine, I'm on time' award that is given to children who are on time and in school in a particular week. An Attendance Hero award is also given to a child who is on time and in school every day.

### Monitoring and review

36. The RMAT Board of Trustees will
- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance, and promote it across the trust and Academy's ethos and policies.
  - ensure the Academy's leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
  - regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends and help Academy leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
  - ensure Academy staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance.
  - share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across RMAT academies.
  - Review Academy attendance at least termly.
  - Require Academies to report to the trustees on the Academy's attendance at regular intervals.
  - have a dedicated attendance lead (the Director of Attendance) who will drive improvement in attendance across RMAT and function as a central point for academies with attendance queries.

### Academy Local Review Boards

37. LRBs will
- Monitor students' attendance in specific year groups and cohorts through regular reporting and discussion at Local Review Board meetings.
  - Discuss any concerns that they have regarding any specific year group or cohort's attendance at Local Review Board meetings with Principals and monitor whether any intervention has led to improvement in the specific cohort's attendance.
  - Report any continuing concerns about a specific cohort's attendance to the Standards Committee of the RMAT Board.

### The Director of Attendance

38. The Director of Attendance is RMAT's dedicated attendance lead who will:
- Drive improvement in attendance across RMAT.

- Lead RMAAT's academy attendance teams.
- Function as a central point of contact for academies with attendance queries.

### **Attendance Team**

39. Our **Senior Academy Attendance Champion (SAC)** is **Mrs Rupa Barson**.

The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Academy and will:

- set a sharp vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that all staff follows these.
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes.
- have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the Academy.
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and students.
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

40. Our Attendance Team is **Mrs Julie Hutchinson** and **Mrs Jill Tindale**.

## Appendix 1: National Framework for Penalty Notices

Under the new **National Framework for Penalty Notices** (which is Government led, not school led), please be aware of the following adjustments:

1. **Per Parent/Per Child:** Penalty Notice Fines will continue to be issued per parent per child. For example, if three siblings are absent for term time leave, each parent will receive three separate fines.
2. **Reasons for Issuing Penalty Notices:** Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days, as well as for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. The school day consists of 2 sessions; morning and afternoon.
3. **First Offence:** The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for a **term time holiday or unauthorised school attendance**, the fine will be charged at £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of issue, increasing to £160 if paid after 21 days.
4. **Second Offence:** If a second Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent for the same pupil within **3 years of the first notice, the fine will be £160 per parent, per child** if paid within 28 days (no reduced fee for paying early).
5. **Third Offence:** On the third occasion of an offence within 3 years, a Penalty Notice will not be issued. **Instead, the case may proceed straight to parental prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty, the Magistrates can impose a fine of up to £1000.**

## Appendix 2: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's Attendance Guidance

**Table 1 - Attendance Codes**

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending an approved place for education which is not a sporting activity or work experience.
D	Dual registered at another school	Student is attending another school
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending College or an unregistered alternative provision
L	Late arrival	Student attends after the register has been taken but before it is closed
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the Academy
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organized, or approved, by the Academy
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Table 2- Authorised Absence Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances <sup>1</sup>	Student has been authorised leave for exceptional circumstances
<b>C1</b>	Leave for participating in a regulated performance or undertaking employment abroad	Student has been authorised to take part in a regulated performance or work abroad
<b>C2</b>	Part time timetable	Student is subject to a part time timetable
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	Academy has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
<b>J1</b>	Interview for employment or admission to another educational institution	Student is attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational establishment
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a mobile child travelling during their Parent's trade or business

<sup>1</sup> Exceptional Circumstances cannot include term time holidays.

Table 3- Unauthorised Absence Codes

Unauthorised absence		
Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the Academy
<b>N</b>	Reason not yet established	Student 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)
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at Academy after the register closed

Table 4 - Other Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
Q	Unable to attend School	Local Authority have failed to put in place access arrangements
X	Not required to be in school	Student at non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.	Student is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the student by the school or local authority is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend due to disruption to travel caused by an emergency
Y3	Partial school closure	Part of the premises are unavoidably out of use and the student cannot be accommodated
Y4	Whole school closure	Whole school closed unexpectedly
Y5	Criminal Justice detention	Student is in police detention, remanded or detained under a sentence
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to school is contrary to guidance or legislation relating to an infection or disease
Y7	Unavoidable cause	Student (Not parent) has been affected by any other cause which has prevented them from attending school
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

### **Appendix 3 – Contacting the Academy to Report an Absence**

If your child is not well enough to attend school, please **call the academy before 9.30am** and advise us of the reason for their absence.

To report an absence **please call: 0113 2527437** or use the absence reporting function on ParentMail.