Cherry Orchard Primary School

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: September 2026

Member of Staff Responsible: Alison Taylor

Review Date: September 2027

This policy was developed following https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance and Birmingham Local Authority Support First Framework.

To be read in conjunction with the CME policy, Medication Policy, SEND Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Ethos Statement

It is the aim of the Governing Body of Cherry Orchard Primary School to support the implementation of policies and procedures that support the vision of:

"We care, we learn we succeed."

As a Rights Respecting School, we actively promote the rights of a child.

Our Vision

Our pupils are happy to come to school and learn. With this happiness and love of learning, they attend school every day which has a positive impact on their education and eventually their future workplace. Attending school means that children can make friends, develop social skills and be able to work with others. As a school, we support parents of pupils who need to improve their attendance by fostering positive relationships and working together in partnership.

Expectations

Children of compulsory school age are expected to attend school every day during term time.

Compulsory (statutory) school age
If a child becomes 5 years old between 1st September and 31st December, they are of compulsory school age on 1st January.
If a child becomes 5 years old between 1st January and 31st March, they are of compulsory school age on 1st April.
If a child becomes 5 years old between 1st April and 31st August, they are of compulsory school age on 1st September.

We use the following percentages to classify our attendance:
98%+ Outstanding
95% - 97% Good
91 – 94% Poor
90% and below Unsatisfactory (officially 'persistently absent').

Expectations are communicated with parents on our website, at the beginning of every academic year via email and on a regular basis via newsletters. The table below is always included in the information shared.

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks' absent	which means this many lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Target setting

We take a whole school approach to attendance led by our Senior Attendance Champion and Head Teacher, Ms A Taylor, and supported by our attendance team (Mrs Fletcher, Mrs Khatkar, Mr Cockbill and Mr Harper), and our class teachers.

We aim to achieve at least 96% attendance each academic year, with no more than 10% of pupils becoming persistently absent. Targets are also set for individual pupils whose attendance is of concern.

Safeguarding

In communicating with parents, the link between attendance and pupils' attainment and wider wellbeing is clarified.

Poor attendance can be an indicator of a safeguarding concern. Where there are safeguarding concerns or attendance falls below 50%, the school will intensify support through statutory children's social care, following the safeguarding procedures detailed in the school's safeguarding policy.

Authorised absence

Authorised absence means that one of the following circumstances applies:

- Illness (not medical or dental appointment) – only when poor attendance is causing serious concern should medical evidence be requested to support the absence (parents to be sent BCC 'Medical Absence' template letter)
- Medical or dental appointment (absence should be agreed with the school in advance when it is not possible for the pupil to attend appointments out of school hours)
- Religious observance (only on dates set by a religious body, so not including Umrah)
- Fixed term exclusion
- Temporary part-time timetable to meet the individual needs of a pupil (for a limited period)
- Participation in a performance (applied for in advance and supported by a Local Authority licence or a BOPA)
- Leave of absence granted by the school in exceptional circumstances
- Attending an approved educational activity (attending another school or taking part in off-site activities such as educational visits and sporting events)
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (school closed unavoidably; transport provided by the local authority is not available; local or national emergency resulting in widespread travel disruption).

Leave of absence

DfE and Birmingham guidelines state that head teachers may no longer authorise a leave of absence except when the leave has been requested in advance and circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of a parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent of sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time
- leave of absence already granted by a previous school (within the last 6 months and supported by documentation from the previous school).

Unauthorised leave

If unauthorised leave is taken, a penalty notice may be issued or legal action may be taken. The penalty notice will be for a minimum amount of £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 between days 22 and 28. If a fine is not paid, court attendance may be required and a fine of up to £1000 per child issued. This could result in a criminal record.

A second penalty notice must be paid at the full amount of £160 within 28 days.

Penalty notices may only be issued twice to a parent in relation to a particular child within a three-year period. If a third offence is committed, the local authority must consider further forms of enforcement such as prosecution.

In the case of unauthorised leave for 6 consecutive school weeks or more, penalty notices may not be issued as cases may proceed straight to court.

School procedures

Promoting 'outstanding' attendance

The school aims to encourage outstanding attendance, where the pupils' efforts are acknowledged, and rewarded. Rewards will be various and may include:

- Termly certificates to individuals with outstanding attendance (98%+ taking into account any unavoidable medical absences)
- Attendance cup awarded each week to the infant and junior class with the highest attendance
- Extra playtime is awarded every Friday afternoon to all pupils who have attended for a full week
- 5 house points are awarded every Friday afternoon to all pupils who have attended for a full week
- Recognition of improved attendance (reviewed for all pupils annually at the end of the academic year, and for pupils on informal action plans after 6 weeks or formal attendance contracts after 10 weeks).

The school also promotes outstanding attendance by informing parents, pupils, staff and governors in the school newsletter.

Promoting punctuality

We are aware that persistent lateness can have a cumulative effect and deny full access to the National Curriculum. Children will be marked late if they arrive after registration, which is 9:00am. If pupils arrive after 9:30am they will be assigned the U code, which means the session is classed as an unauthorised absence. In exceptional circumstances this time might be extended, for example, for pupils who travel

via taxi to the resource base.

We discourage lateness by:

- Providing supervision for children from 8:50am
- Keeping a late book every morning and after school
- Pastoral team monitor punctuality on a daily basis and speak to parents when necessary
- Ensuring a breakfast club facility is available on site
- The Punctuality Cup is awarded each week to the most punctual infant and junior class.

First Day of absence

- Parents are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on each day of absence. The reason is then recorded on SIMs.
- If the school is not contacted by 9.30am, parents will be contacted by telephone in the first instance to alert them that their child is not in school and that they should contact the office to confirm absence and provide a reason for their child not being in school.
- If no contact is made, then the school will keep trying throughout the day. Other emergency contacts will be called as well to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil. In the case of a child in care (CIC/LAC), the child's social worker will be informed of any unexplained absence on the first day.
- Produce a daily print out of pupils who do not attend, where no reason is provided.
- If by day 3, parents have left messages giving a reason for absence but no verbal contact has been made, the school office will call to speak to parents in person.
- If by day 3, a child has not attended school and the office has not been able to make contact, this is recorded on CPOMs and the pastoral team and/or DSLs are informed. The CME policy is then followed with subsequent contact with parents is to be made by pastoral, to include home visits as part of safeguarding procedures.
- If pastoral establish that the pupil is on holiday, the matter is passed back to Mrs Khatkar and Mr Harper to follow Leave in Term Time procedures.

Strategies for tackling persistent absence and emerging concerns

- The pastoral team tracks attendance weekly and highlights any concerns to the senior attendance champion, Ms Taylor.
- The head teacher refers to DfE VYED (View Your Education Data) website on a weekly basis to review attendance of groups and individuals, and on a termly basis to review the DfE analysis and adjust the attendance action plan accordingly.
- Patterns of absence and lateness are monitored by class teachers and the pastoral team, and reported weekly to the senior attendance champion.
- Particular groups of pupils whose attendance is deemed poor or unsatisfactory are targeted. The senior attendance champion works with other schools in the local area to share effective practice when there are common barriers to attendance.
- The school follows Birmingham Local Authority's 'Support First school attendance framework and guidance' when addressing instances of poor attendance. An informal attendance meeting and Early Help is offered in the first instance (with a member of the pastoral team acting as lead practitioner and making referrals to outside agencies where appropriate). An informal

action plan is put in place during this meeting and attendance will be closely monitored for the following 6 weeks.

- The pastoral team liaises with other schools attended by any siblings to support the Early Help process.
- In the case of pupils with an EHCP, the SENDCo liaises with all appropriate agencies to put in place additional support and adjustments to ensure the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- If attendance does not improve following Early Help, parents are invited to a formal attendance meeting (FAM) with the senior attendance champion, where the potential for legal intervention is made clear and an attendance contract is put in place.
- If attendance still does not improve, the senior attendance champion will work with Birmingham City Council's Education Legal Intervention Team.

Part-time timetables

All children of compulsory school age have a legal right to a suitable, full-time education. A part-time timetable cuts a child's hours at school and should only be used as a short-term measure.

Key principles for part-time timetables:

- Exceptional reasons only, for example, for a medical condition preventing full-time attendance or as part of a structured transition plan or a structured reintegration plan back into school.
- Schools cannot use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour, cover staff shortages or make up for a lack of resources or funding.
- Parents or carers must fully agree in writing (see appendix 1). A school cannot force a part-time timetable on a family, and parents can withdraw their consent at any time.
- It must be time-limited and not treated as a long-term solution. Part-time timetables should generally be limited to 6 to 8 weeks, with a fixed end date for returning to full-time hours.
- The arrangement must be formally reviewed at least every two weeks to monitor progress and build back up to full-time hours.
- Schools must notify the local authority and record the missed sessions as authorised absence.

<u>Attendance is everyone's responsibility</u>

Parents will:

- Notify the school by phone/email by 9.30am on the first day of any absence, giving the reason for absence and the likely date of return to school.
- Notify the school if their child is well enough to come to school but is feeling a little 'under the weather' by completing the online form.
- Ensure their children arrive at school in time for the morning register at 9.00am every day.



- Plan holidays and family visits during the school holidays.
- Plan routine dental check-ups and visits to the optician during the school holidays.
- Inform the school of any medical, optician or dental appointments in advance if they are to take place in term time.
- Apply for any leave of absence during term time at least 2 weeks prior to the start date and before making any travel arrangements.
- Avoid requesting any leave of absence during periods where there are National Curriculum assessments (beginning of April to the end of June).
- Liaise with the pastoral team, head teacher and other agencies where necessary to improve their child's attendance when they are at risk of persistent absence.

The governing body will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance, promote it across the school's ethos and policies and, in consultations with senior leaders, set attendance targets that demonstrate high expectations.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Review attendance data and progress towards attendance targets termly. Discuss and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvements efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts/groups who need it most.
- Ensure the link governor for safeguarding focuses on attendance.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Senior Attendance Champion will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes a sense of belonging and the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy (reviewed annually), which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of cohorts, groups and individuals to identify immediate support needed and look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and work with staff to develop strategies to address them.
- Ensure the termly census data is completed accurately and shared with Birmingham Local Authority by the deadlines set.
- Ensure the school follows Birmingham City Council's 'Support First' attendance procedures and conduct informal attendance meetings with the support of the pastoral team. Upload informal attendance plans onto CPOMs.
- Monitor the impact of informal attendance plans over a 6 week period with the support of the pastoral team.
- Respond to leave of absence requests in a timely manner, following the DfE and Birmingham Local Authority guidance.
- Conduct a formal attendance meeting (FAM) if attendance has not improved following the Early Help process. Upload the completed and signed formal attendance contract onto CPOMs.
- In consultation with Governors, set annual targets for attendance that demonstrate high expectations.
- Inform Governors of attendance data at least termly in full governing body meetings and safeguarding committee meetings.
- Reward classes with the best attendance and punctuality in assemblies on a weekly basis.
- Reward outstanding attendance in assemblies on a termly basis.

The pastoral team will:

- Provide the Senior Attendance Champion with a weekly report showing the number of sessions missed for each pupil from the beginning of the school year.
- Provide the Senior Attendance Champion with a weekly report of pupils who have had a 'broken week'.
- Provide the Senior Attendance Champion with a weekly report showing pupils who have 3 or more sessions of absence in a half-term or 5 or more sessions of absence in a term.
- Provide the Senior Attendance Champion with a weekly report showing the percentage of L and U marks for each class.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and punctuality, and work with families to remove them.
- Following communication from the administration team, conduct a home visit (adhering to the school' Home Visits Policy) on the third day of an unexplained absence and report to the Senior Attendance Champion.
- Consult with parents of pupils with 3 or more broken weeks in a half term or those at risk of persistent absence to understand barriers to attendance and agree actions and clear success measures, liaising with outside agencies to support the Early Help process where necessary.
- Following consultations, upload record of actions and success measures on CPOMs (see appendix 2).
- Write attendance certificates every term (names to be provided by the Senior Attendance Champion).

Class teachers will:

- Accurately complete attendance registers on time at 9:00am each morning and 1:35pm each afternoon, using SIMs.
- If parents are late to collect (3.30pm in EYFS and KS1; 3.35pm in KS2), they will be taken to the school office and their names should be recorded in the late book.
- Report any concerns or patterns relating to attendance or punctuality to the senior attendance champion and pastoral team via CPOMs.
- Closely monitor the attendance of children whose attendance was below 95% in the previous academic year, and ensure they feel a sense of belonging at school.
- Inform parents of their child's attendance percentages at parents' evenings.

School administrators will:

- Accurately complete admissions and attendance registers.
- Ensure SIMs has the correct information for each pupil, including contact details for two different responsible adults.
- Support the senior attendance champion to communicate attendance expectations to parents and carers.
- Support the senior attendance champion to process applications for leave of absence.
- Complete the school census termly.
- Follow the first day of absence procedures.
- In the case of a child in care (CIC/LAC), inform the child's social worker if there are any unexplained absences from school on the first day of absence. The social worker should also be informed if their name is to be deleted from the school register.
- Liaise with the local authority in the case of a child absent from education.
- Provide class teachers with attendance percentages the day before the autumn and spring parents' evenings and the day before the end of year reports are due to go out to parents.
- Record collection times for pupils who are in the late book.
- Provide the senior attendance champion with a weekly report showing the attendance percentages for each class and punctuality for each class.

Birmingham Local Authority will:

- Rigorously track local attendance data.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team to provide core functions to all schools free of charge.
- Bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools within Birmingham.
- Hold termly Targeted Support Meetings with schools.
- Provide access to multi-disciplinary support for families to tackle the causes of absenteeism.
- Provide legal intervention where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.

Appendix 1



School/Parent Part-time/Reduced Timetable Agreement



Parent/Carer

I understand my child has been placed on a part-time/reduced timetable for a limited period of time. I have discussed the matter fully with the school and agree, during the period of the part time timetable to:

- Take full responsibility for my child during the hours when not attending school
- Work with the school on the reintegration of my child back into school/full-time education
- Ensure there is supervision of schoolwork
- Ensure there is a flow of work between school and home for marking and guidance
- Take full responsibility for the health and safety of my child when they are not in school.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____ Date: _____

School

During the period of the part-time/reduced timetable the school will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the part-time/reduced timetable
- Listen to the voice of the child
- Arrange and hold regular reviews on the agreed dates
- Provide work for the child to do whilst at home and mark all work completed
- Acknowledge that, on a part-time timetable, the child is partly absent from school which must be recorded with code C2 on the registers even if the child completes work at home
- Work with the parent to ensure the swift reintegration of the child back into full-time education
- Seek the advice of agencies as necessary, with the consent of the parents.

School Signature: _____ Date: _____

Child's Signature (if appropriate): _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2

School: **Date:**

Pupil name: **Class:**

Pupil Attendance Review - Action Plan				
Key Issues	Action	Who	When	Status

Success measures:

1.

2.

3.