



# Cherry Tree School

## Attendance Policy

Version	Date	Action
1	January 2016	Warrington Borough Council Policy personalised for Cherry Tree School- Spring Term 2016
2	January 2016	Attendance Policy ratified by governors.
3	June 2022	Reviewed and updated
4	February 2023	Reviewed and updated following external safeguarding audit. Ratified by governors February 2023
5	May 2024	Review and updated with Local Authority Attendance Officer
6	June 2024	Reviewed and updated by the Curriculum Committee- amendments: clarification on step 1 to 5, reference to the latest DfE documents- KCSIE 2024
7	July 2024	Ratified by Full Governing Board
8	January 2026	Reviewed and updated to reflect KCSIE 2025
Next Review Due: January 2027		

## Statement of Intent

At Cherry Tree School, we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Cherry Tree School values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

## Legal framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance or otherwise

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Once a parent registers their child and they are added onto our school roll, the procedures set out in this policy apply.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006, requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2022) 'Behaviour in schools: Advice for Head Teachers and school staff'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2022) 'Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Missing Children Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### **Categorising absence**

Where pupils on the school roll are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone or via our communication system/app, on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

**Illness:** In most cases a telephone call or notification via our school app from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

**Medical/dental appointments:** Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day.

**Other authorised circumstances:** This relates to occasions where there is a cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package

**Exclusions:** exclusion from school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher/teaching assistant will plan for work to be sent home.

**Family holidays and extended leave: the new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.** Any applications for leave of absence must be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Parents can be fined via Warrington Borough Council's Attendance Service for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school and the absence would be 'unauthorised' on the student's record.

Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday in term time. Parents do not have a right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year and may face legal action been taken against them

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

If a pupil fails to return after a period of absence, parents will be contacted. If contact cannot be made with parents, the next person identified as emergency contact will be telephoned. If we are unable to get hold of anyone after one school day has passed, the absence will be reported to the local authority Attendance Officer.

**Religious observance:** Cherry Tree School acknowledges the multi faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends, and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

### **Late arrival**

Registration takes place at Cherry Tree Primary School at 9am. Pupils arriving after this time will need to access via the main reception as the school gates are locked at 9am. Anyone arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The number of minutes late will be recorded. Should a child arrive after 9:30am, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised', unless a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. Any unauthorised absence will affect the child's overall attendance figure.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Absences will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Cherry Tree Primary School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

As such, the Governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parent.
- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- The Chair of Governors will review attendance each term with the Head Teacher during their termly meeting and will represent the governing board on attendance matters.
- The Head Teacher will lead on attendance within the school.
- Ensure the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site. A pre-safeguarding visit will be applied to ensure pupils' safety should any child be educated off site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The school will:

- Have staff members on duty on the playground in the morning to ensure all children come into school safely and the gate is locked at 9am.

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents via the school newsletter.
- A reward system which includes weekly attendance figures for each class read out and recorded on a chart on the hall; 100% attendance stickers termly; 100% attendance certificates annually; great attendance stickers termly.
- Form positive relationships with parents and pupils.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach that reinforces good school attendance - with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and achieve.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site are implemented.

Request that parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance with the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Log absences via the school app.
- Inform school before 3pm if a different person is collecting their child.
- Let us know in writing if their child is allowed to walk home alone. (KS2 only)
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school: take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term time, and where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday.

### **Support systems**

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/ separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

At Cherry Tree School we also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and children in care.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Referrals to support agencies
- Time-limited reduced timetables

- Reward systems

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occur Cherry Tree School and Warrington LA attendance Team will consider the use of legal sanctions.

### **Education Supervision Orders (ESOs)**

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an ESO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be held every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an ESO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

This policy will be reviewed in January 2027.

## Managing Attendance – Our Termly Procedures

Step	Trigger	Action
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management of Attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Termly census data gathered and analysed by Head Teacher and School Business Manager- circumstances are scrutinised. Where a child has valid reasons for absence such as SEND, a different approach may be adopted.</li> <li>Meeting with Attendance Officer</li> <li>Attendance reviewed with Chair of Governors, School Business Manager and Head Teacher</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance below 95% for the first time, and/or highlighted as an absentee on the termly census</li> <li>More than 4 occasions of late arrival and /or more than 30 minutes late</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the first occasion receive an app message</li> <li>Any child meeting the late trigger receives an app message</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If attendance continues to be below 95% during the next term</li> <li>If punctuality continues to be more than 4 occasions of late arrival and /or more than 30 minutes late during the next term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Stage 1 letter sent home (highlighting the concern and offering support)</li> <li>Punctuality Letter 1 sent home (highlighting the concern and offering support)</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If attendance continues to be below 95%, despite letter 1 being received</li> <li>If punctuality continues to be more than 4 occasions of late arrival and /or more than 30 minutes late, despite letter 1 being received</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Stage 2 letter sent home (escalating concerns/ legal requirement for children to attend school highlighted)</li> <li>Punctuality Letter 2 sent home (escalating concerns/ legal requirement for children to attend school highlighted)</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No improvement to attendance or punctuality despite and letters issued and the above stages having been followed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 3 Letter sent home - Invite parents in for a meeting re attendance or punctuality</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If attendance/punctuality to be a concern, cases will be discussed with LA attendance officer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stage 4 letter sent home – Informing parents that attendance will be reviewed with Local Authority Attendance Officer</li> </ul>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If attendance declines further parents are required to complete a 'Parenting Contract'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are required to attend a meeting to complete the 'Parenting Contract'</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If attendance does not improve following this, the LA will consider fast track to prosecution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further information will be sent from the Local Authority</li> </ul>

### Exceptions

a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For children with SEND or an extended period of illness a regular review will take place to establish what support can be put in place to minimise disruption to the child's education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review letter will be sent home inviting the parents to a meeting to discuss attendance and the support available</li> </ul>
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