



Cheam Common Junior Academy

Attendance Policy



Rationale

“Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and the best schools will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the education opportunities available to them in law. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.”
(*School Attendance – Policy and Practice on categorisation of Absence. DfE*)

Aims & the Importance of Attendance

The Governors and Staff at Cheam Common Junior Academy recognise that good attendance gives our children the best possible opportunity for learning and reaching their full potential. The aim of this policy is to create a partnership by which governors, staff, pupils, parents and the Borough School Attendance Service (BSAS) can promote and monitor regular attendance, and intervene at an early stage to identify and rectify any problems which arise in order to avoid educational disadvantage to any pupil.

Punctuality

At Cheam Common Junior we feel it is essential that children make a positive start to the school day. If children are late they often miss vital instructions and learning and they can also disrupt the class.

- The school gates are opened at 8.30am and children can come into school between 8.30am and 8.45am.
- The school day begins at 8.45am. Registers are taken between 8.45am and 8.55am. Any child entering school after 8.45am must report to the office and will receive a late mark in the register if they arrive after 8.55am.
- Registers close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after this time will be officially absent for the morning session. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example a doctor's appointment.
- The Headteacher and Assistant Headteachers monitor lateness regularly. The school will make contact with parents / carers where there is a pattern of lateness or where a child arrives late for school several times over half a term.

Legal Responsibility for Attendance

It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to get their children to school and on time (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996). In light of this, parents/carers are required to follow and understand these procedures if their child is ill and unable to come to school:

- Parents / carers must contact the school office by telephone on the first day of absence before 10am. Appropriate codes will be entered in the registers and on SIMS.

- If no message has been received by 10am the office staff will send a text message to the child's contact number advising that their child is absent from school and requesting they contact the school before midday with a reason for absence. This morning session will be recorded as unauthorised until a valid reason is obtained, while any further sessions will be given appropriate absence codes.
- Parents/carers must send a written explanation of a child's absence when they return to school or have explained it fully via telephone to a member of the office staff.

Teachers and office staff will be available to discuss reasons for absence with children/parents/carers as appropriate.

Monitoring Attendance & Rewards System

Our Attendance Officer monitors attendance data regularly and provides reports to the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher (Inclusion). They will contact parents / carers whose child's absence causes concern (at amber or red level) to discuss how things can be improved.

The school uses the following guidance with parents and pupils; as an incentive to maintain outstanding levels of gold, silver and bronze attendance, termly certificates/badges are used as part of the school's rewards system (see Behaviour Policy). Annual 100% Attendance Certificates are also issued on the last day of the Summer term to reward children with perfect attendance:

Gold Silver or Bronze	Your child's attendance is above 97%. They are absent less than 6 days in a school year. They are highly likely to achieve the best levels for their ability by the end of KS2.
Green	Your child's attendance is 95% plus. They are absent less than 10 days in the school year. They will probably achieve the best levels for their ability by the end of KS2.
Amber	Your child's attendance is 90 - 94% plus. They are missing up to 20 days in each school year – a full month! This amount of absence will make progress difficult and reduce their level of success.
Red	Your child's attendance is less than 90%. They are missing at least 1 or 2 days a fortnight; this is the same as nearly six months throughout their time in KS2. Missing this amount of time will make it extremely difficult for them to keep up in lessons and make progress. You need to take action! As a parent or carer, you could face a fine or court action.

Special Authorised Absence

Holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods and the school's policy is that absence for holidays will not be authorised during term time. If parents take their child on holiday during term time, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued by the Local Authority.

Parents must apply in writing to the Headteacher, using the required form from the school office, should they wish to take their child / children out of school for any reason during term time. The Headteacher only authorises absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. The expected return date must be specified and adhered to. Absence after this date will be unauthorised.

Special authorised absences cannot routinely be approved beyond a total of 10 days across any academic year. Any absence beyond this limit will be considered unauthorised unless the

Headteacher has chosen to use discretion on compassionate grounds. The headteacher, in consultation with the governing body of the Academy Trust, may use statutory powers under the Education Act, including the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, where appropriate. The Borough School Attendance Service may also instigate legal proceedings under Section 444(1a) of the Education Act if appropriate.

Special Authorised Absence is never authorised during Key Stage 2 SATs Week for Year 6 children. Parents are reminded of this frequently through our weekly newsletters. If parents take their child on holiday during this period a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

Following a special authorised absence, if a child does not return to school 10 days after the expected agreed return date, the school reserves the right to remove their name from the school roll. The resulting vacancy will be filled according to the school's normal admission procedures.

Other unauthorised absence

A parent/carer/sibling being unwell is not a reason for absence and parents/carers must endeavour to make arrangements for their children to be brought to school and be collected. The school will direct parents/carers to external support which may be available and offer help and support as far as practicable if this is a long term condition.

Medical or Dental Appointments

Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments. If appropriate, the child should return to school after the appointment. Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

Consequences of Unauthorised Absence

Where a pupil incurs a certain level of unauthorised absence and there is a level of concern, the case may be referred by the Headteacher to the **Borough School Attendance Service** who will advise and support parents on the pupil's attendance difficulties and if no improvement is made, may use statutory powers under the Education Act, including the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, where appropriate. The Borough School Attendance Service may also instigate legal proceedings under Section 444(1a) of the Education Act if appropriate.

Child Missing Education

If parents do not provide information about a child's absence and the school cannot make contact with them within 20 school days, then a child is considered to be a **Child Missing Education**. This means the local authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which will include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to locate missing child/children.

Responsibility for Policy

This Policy has been approved by the school's governing body, senior management team which includes the Headteacher, the Assistant Headteacher and the Attendance Officer

Publication of Policy

This policy will be published on the school's website and a paper copy is available on request from the school office. **A copy of this policy will be included in the induction pack for parents / carers of new children.**

